



# THE LIBERTY BOYS OF '76

A Weekly Magazine containing Stories of the American Revolution.

Issued Weekly—By Subscription \$2.50 per year.

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Price 5 Cents.

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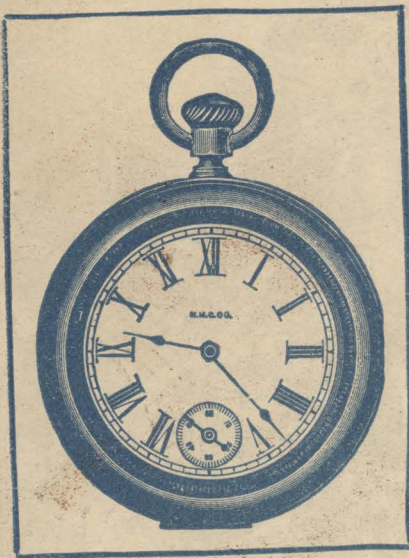


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## Beset by British and Tories.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### "THE TIMES THAT TRIED MEN'S SOULS."

It was the last week in December, 1776.

General Washington, the great commander-in-chief of the Continental Army, had been forced (partly by circumstances over which he could have exercised no control, but more by the treachery of General Lee, who had disobeyed repeated orders, and had refused to come with the seven thousand men under his command and join Washington and his portion of the army) to retreat across New Jersey, and across the Delaware, behind which river he took refuge.

The British, having no boats, could not follow him across the river, and Generals Howe and Cornwallis left the army stationed on the east bank of the Delaware and returned to New York, to await the freezing up of the river, when they would take the army across on the ice.

At least, that was what Howe said he intended doing, but the facts were that he did not think he would be called upon to cross the river at all.

Washington's army had dwindled to less than three thousand men, and was dwindling day by day, as the terms of service of the men expired, and the British commander-in-

chief thought that the Continental Army would cease to exist within another month or so.

He issued a proclamation offering pardon and protection to all citizens who, within sixty days, should take the oath of allegiance to the British Crown, and within ten days more than three thousand of the most wealthy and influential people had accepted the offer.

This, in connection with the condition of the Continental Army, now a mere handful of men, caused General Howe to regard the war as practically ended.

He was likened to Cæsar, who "came, saw and conquered," and was made a Knight Commander of the Bath, and Christmas was decided as the time for the conferring of the red ribbon.

So confident was Howe that the war was ended that he detached a goodly number of troops from the army at Trenton, and sent them with instructions to take possession of Newport, he considering this a convenient station for British vessels entering the Sound.

He figured that the Hessians, under Donop and Rahl, and the Scotchmen under Grant, would easily annihilate the remnant of Washington's army as soon as the river froze over, so they could get across.

Cornwallis even made arrangements to sail for Eng-



land, he considering that his services would no longer be needed.

Just at this time Thomas Paine began publishing a series of pamphlets entitled "The Crisis," in the first of which he made use of a term that has become familiar to all, viz., "These are the times that try men's souls."

And indeed they were the times that tried men's souls.

The majority of the people who had hoped for freedom and independence were in despair; it seemed as if there could be no hope.

But there was one brave heart that did not despair.

It belong to that great and wonderful man, Washington.

While others were lamenting the sad state of affairs, and making up their minds to accept the seemingly inevitable, and return to their former state as subjects of the King of England, George Washington was contemplating a stroke that would retrieve the fortunes of the patriots and fill the hearts of the British with consternation.

He knew the general disposition of the British forces, and saw that care had not been exercised. The redcoats had not thought it necessary to exercise care. They were intending to attack, and never thought of such a thing as that they might be attacked.

They would have laughed at such a suggestion, had anyone made it.

But Washington was in deadly earnest.

He had just been reinforced by the arrival of three thousand troops under Generals Gates and Sullivan. These were the troops that had been under Lee, and which the commander-in-chief had been trying for more than a month to get to join the troops under himself, but which, owing to the treachery and rebellious conduct of Lee, had been held back and kept away from the commander-in-chief. They had been freed from the control of Lee at last, however, he having been captured over in New Jersey, and under Gates and Sullivan they had moved southward as rapidly as possible, and joined Washington and his army at a most opportune time.

Washington was planning a daring and brilliant stroke, and he had talked the matter over with Generals Greene, Gates, Sullivan, Cadwalader and Ewing, and it had been decided to make the attempt.

The commander-in-chief's plan was to, by a sudden attack, overwhelm the British centre at Trenton, and force the enemy to retreat to New York, but before making the move he wished to gain a better idea of the disposition of the British forces than he at present possessed.

He had a general idea, but he wished definite knowledge.

There was only one way to gain this knowledge—to send a spy over into the British camp.

This would be a very difficult and dangerous undertaking, however.

Where was the man who would risk his life in such fashion?

The commander-in-chief did not have to think long before he thought of one who would be willing to attempt it.

In his army was a company of youths known as "The Liberty Boys of '76."

They were brave and daring youths, and had already done wonderful work in battle.

Their commander was a youth named Dick Slater, a bright, brave and handsome youth of eighteen years, who had done some wonderful work as spy and despatch bearer, as well as in the ranks as a fighter.

This youth would, the commander-in-chief was sure, be not only willing to venture over into the British encampment, but would be glad to do so.

Nothing was too difficult and dangerous for Dick to attempt, if by so doing he could aid the cause of liberty, which he loved so well.

The commander-in-chief sent for Dick, and the youth reported at headquarters immediately.

"Well, Dick," said General Washington, "are you ready to undertake a very difficult and dangerous undertaking?"

He looked at Dick searchingly, with a half-smile on his face.

He had no doubt regarding the answer he would receive, however.

"I am ready to undertake to do anything which you may set me at, your excellency," said Dick, quietly.

The commander-in-chief nodded approvingly.

"I expected to hear you say as much," he said. "Well, I have a difficult and dangerous task for you, Dick. It is to go over across the river into the camp of the enemy and learn all that you can regarding the disposition of their forces. I wish the information in detail, so that I may know what I am about when I move across the river to attack the British."

Dick showed no signs of surprise.

"I am ready to make the attempt, sir," he said. "Perhaps I had better wait until after nightfall to cross the river, however."

"Yes; I judge that would be best and safest. You are to use your own judgment in this matter, and do the work in your own way. Your work in the past has given me great confidence in you, my boy, and I feel safe in leaving the ways and means entirely to you."

"Thank you, sir," said Dick, earnestly. "I shall try and not disappoint you, or make you sorry you did so."

The commander-in-chief gave Dick such instructions as



he thought advisable regarding what he wished to learn, and then the youth saluted and withdrew.

He returned to the quarters occupied by the company of "Liberty Boys," and they were eager to know what the commander-in-chief wished with him.

"I am to go over into the British encampment to spy on the redcoats, boys," Dick said; "I shall start right away after dark."

"Say, I wish I could go with you, Dick," said Bob Estabrook, a bright-faced youth of about Dick's age.

Dick and Bob were close friends; in fact, their homes were within a quarter of a mile of each other, not far from Tarrytown, in New York State, and the boys had been playmates all their lives.

"I think one person will be able to get around and make his way into the enemy's camp alone better than two could do it, Bob," replied Dick.

"Maybe so," doubtfully. "Why couldn't both of us go, and go separately?"

"It would be more likely to cause suspicion if two youths put in an appearance in camp about the same time, Bob."

"Maybe so," said Bob, reluctantly.

Bob, like Dick, was as brave as a lion, and was not satisfied unless he was doing something.

He was intensely patriotic, and wished to be doing something for the cause.

He fretted whenever forced to be inactive.

The other youths liked action, also, but they were more content to remain quietly in camp for the reason that they had not had a taste of spy work.

Dick and Bob had both done good work as spies, and it seemed as if as soon as they had had one experience of that kind they were eager for more.

The great danger of going among the enemy seemed to recommend the work to them.

Dick, however, was never reckless.

He was always very careful.

He realized, when he went upon an expedition of that kind, that a good deal was at stake, and carried himself accordingly.

He realized that the commander-in-chief depended on him to secure valuable information, and he would do nothing to jeopardize the success of the undertaking.

He remained in the quarters during the rest of the afternoon, talking with the youths and making his preparations for the task before him, and after he had eaten supper, and darkness had settled over all, he bade Bob and the rest of his brave "Liberty Boys" good-by, and went out into the night.

Dick had partially outlined his plans, and he did not

hesitate when he left the camp, but struck out in a northern direction through the timber.

His course was parallel with the Delaware River, and he kept on until he came to a log house which stood a hundred yards from the river bank.

He was challenged and responded, after which he entered the cabin, and was greeted by a patriot officer.

The officer knew Dick well.

"Ah, Dick! Glad to see you!" he said; "which way, this cold and dreary night?"

"I wish to be taken across the river, Captain Shively," said Dick.

A knowing look appeared in the eyes of the captain.

"You are going on a spying expedition among the British, Dick," he said; "you will have to be careful, my boy. If you are detected and captured, you know what the penalty will be."

"Yes—death, captain; but I could not die in a better cause."

Dick spoke quietly and calmly.

The thought of danger to himself had no terrors for him.

"Yes, death, without doubt, Dick; and we cannot afford to lose you. You must be careful!"

"I am always careful, Captain Shively; it is not so much that I fear death, but I should hate to fail in the task which I have been set to accomplish. If I should fail it would be a great disappointment to the commander-in-chief, and a great drawback, as he reckons on the information which I may secure being of value to him."

"True. Well, I will have one of the men row you across the river at once."

"Thank you!" said Dick.

A few minutes later he was at the river's edge in company with a patriot soldier—one of those detailed to guard the boats, which were moored here—and they entered a small rowboat and crossed to the other side.

It was a rather dangerous undertaking, as there was considerable floating ice in the river, but they succeeded in getting across, finally, and Dick leaped ashore on the other side.

He bade the soldier good-by, and then plunged into the timber and made his way rapidly along.

Presently he entered a little clearing, and approached a log house which stood in the centre.

This cabin was the home of Joe Saunders, a hunter and trapper, and a staunch and true patriot, and he had already done much to aid the cause.

Reaching the door of the cabin, Dick gave a peculiar knock upon it.



There was the sound of footsteps, and the next instant the door opened, and a rough-looking, but honest-faced man in a hunter's garb stood in the doorway.

The light from a fire in a large fireplace at the end of the room showed Dick's face quite plainly, and the man seized the youth's hand and shook it heartily.

"So it's you, is it, Dick, my boy?" he remarked; "come in, come in! I'm right glad to see you!"

## CHAPTER II.

### THE REDCOAT VISITOR.

"I'm glad to see you, Joe," said Dick, heartily; "I was afraid that you might not be at home."

"I'm usually home at night, Dick."

"I know that, but was afraid that this might be one of your nights out."

"What's in the wind, Dick?" asked Joe, as he closed the door, Dick having entered.

"I'm going down into the British camp, Joe."

Dick had seated himself before the fireplace, now, and Joe, after placing a fresh log on the fire, looked at his young friend with serious eyes.

"That's going to be a dangerous undertaking, my boy!" he said, soberly.

"I know there will be considerable risk, Joe; but nothing risk, nothing gain, you know."

"Yes, I know; but——"

"But, what?"

"You had better stay here, Dick, and let me go down there in your place."

"You are a friend, indeed, Joe," said Dick, earnestly; "but I could not think of letting you take my place. I think I will be able to go into the enemy's camp, and come out again in safety. I am but a boy, you know, and will not be suspected nearly so soon as a man would be."

"That is true, doubtless; but I don't see how you are to accomplish it, Dick. It looks to me like going straight to your death."

"Oh, not so bad as that, Joe."

"Well, it seems so to me."

They sat there and talked for half an hour, and then Dick said:

"I came in here in the hope that you might be able to furnish me something in the way of a costume that would help make it easy for me to enter the lines of the British,

Joe. Have you anything in the way of a British uniform here?"

Joe shook his head.

"Not a thing, Dick," he replied.

Dick looked disappointed.

"I was in hopes you would at least have a red coat," he said, with a faint smile. "That would help a fellow out a bit after nightfall, when the lack of the other portions of the regulation British costume would not be apt to be noticed."

"I haven't a thing, Dick, I am sorry to say. The fact is, I thought it better not to have anything of the kind, as, in case the redcoats were to search my cabin, they would find nothing to tell against me; see?"

"I see; that is the best plan, too, of course; but a red coat would have been very acceptable, just at this time."

"Listen!" said Joe, suddenly, in a low tone of caution.

Both listened, and they heard the sound of footsteps outside on the frozen ground.

Then there came a knock on the door.

"Who is there?" called out Joe, laying his hand on his trusty rifle.

"A friend, I trust," was the reply; "I have lost my way, and wish to be directed aright."

"It's a stranger," whispered Joe.

"And only one," said Dick, significantly.

Joe nodded, and then strode to the door, and lifting the bar, pulled the door open.

A young man of about twenty-one or twenty-two years stood outside.

He was dressed in the uniform of a lieutenant in the British Army.

"Come in," said Joe.

The young officer obeyed.

He looked around the cabin, and when he saw there was only one other person present, and that one a mere youth, he drew a breath of relief.

"You have a nice fire, and I am chilled with riding," he said; "so, if you do not object, I shall stop a few minutes and get warm."

"Stop as long as you like," said Joe, as he indicated a bench near the fire, upon which the young officer took a seat.

He stretched his hands out toward the blaze and drew a breath of satisfaction.

"This is more comfortable than riding through the timber alone in the cold," he said.

"I do not doubt it," replied Joe.

Dick had said nothing, other than to greet the newcomer with a brief, "How do you do?"



He was watching the young man closely, however.

And he was thinking rapidly.

He sized the redcoat up.

He was a young man, about Dick's build, and the youth decided that the clothes would about fit him.

A bold thought came to him:

"Why not make this young officer a prisoner, don his clothing, and enter the British Army in his stead?"

It would be a bold scheme, and one which might prove successful, especially if he could learn the young officer's name, where he had come from, and a few other things.

Dick succeeded in giving Joe a significant look, and was sure his friend understood.

"What did you say your name was?" asked Joe, carelessly.

"Lieutenant Maurice Merton," was the reply.

And then the young man looked at Joe and Dick searchingly.

"How are matters down this way?" he asked. "Are the rebels in shape to do anything, or are the king's men sure of winning and winding up the war at an early date?"

"Oh, the king's men will win, without doubt," said Joe, "and I'm mighty glad of it!" he added, lying with astonishing glibness and heartiness.

"You are not rebels, then?" with an eager look.

"Not we!" said Joe. "We are loyal king's men!"

"Good! I'm glad to hear that! Then you think the war is virtually ended?"

"It certainly is! Why, what can Washington hope to do against the fine army of the king with a mere handful of ragged men? Nothing!"

"And that is the way General Howe looks at it, I am sure," the young officer said, falling into the trap set for him. He does not expect to have to return to this part of the country, I am sure, and the despatches which I am the bearer of give instructions to the commanders, Donop, Rahl and Grant, telling them how to go to work to close up the war."

Dick and Joe again exchanged glances.

"When did you leave New York?" asked Joe.

"Two days ago, and I have had a long, cold ride, I tell you!"

"No doubt; well, your long ride is virtually ended now."

"It certainly must be. How much farther is it to the British encampment?"

"About two miles."

"So far as that?"

"Yes; but that isn't far."

"Well, no, comparatively speaking. It is nearly an hour's ride through this blasted timber, though."

"Yes; one cannot ride fast through the timber."

"I should say not; what bothered me the worst, however, was the fear that I was not on the right track."

"You have come somewhat out of your way."

"But I do not regret it, as I will have a chance to rest and get warm before having to report to the officers in charge of our forces."

"I suppose that Lord Cornwallis will return and take charge here, in winding up the war, will he not?" asked Joe.

"I think not. I heard the fellows talking, before I left New York, and they said that Lord Cornwallis was talking of starting for England the day after Christmas."

"He must think the war ended, then, sure enough."

"They all do, back there. It is common talk that the Hessians and Scotchmen will be amply able to crush what is left of Washington's army, as soon as the river freezes solid enough so that they can get across the river."

"Doubtless that is right," agreed Joe, though he did not believe it.

"By the way," said the young lieutenant, "you haven't something to eat handy, have you? And a little something to drink? I'm quite hungry and as thirsty as can be."

"I have some cold venison, lieutenant, and a bottle of old rye. You are quite welcome to as much as you can eat and drink of those."

"They will do nicely!" with an air of satisfaction. "Set them out and I will prove to you that I am both hungry and thirsty. I will pay you for the food and drink."

"As an officer in the king's service, you are welcome to them without charge," said Joe, and he quickly set out a dish of venison and a bottle of whisky and a cup.

The officer sat up to the table and ate and drank in a manner that proved he had spoken the truth when he said he was hungry and thirsty.

"This is fine—excellent!" he said. "The venison is good, and the whisky puts new life into me. Ah! I shall ride into camp feeling like a fighting cock!"

But he was destined to be disappointed.

When he had finished eating and drinking, and pushed his stool back from the table, he turned, to find himself looking down the muzzles of two pistols, held in the hands of Dick and Joe.

"W-why, w-what d-does this m-mean?" he gasped, his face turning red, then pale; "why play this miserable joke on me?" he added, pettishly, suddenly making up his mind it was done in a joke.

"There is no joke about this, as you will find, Lieutenant Merton," said Dick, coldly; "you are our prisoner! Place your hands together, behind your back, and turn your back to us, please."



"But this is outrageous! You cannot mean it!" gasped the lieutenant. "You said you were king's men."

"You are a very unsuspecting young man," said Dick, "and were easily fooled. You must remember that all is fair in love and war. This will teach you to not believe everything that is told you by strangers."

A curse escaped the lips of the young lieutenant, and he looked as if on the point of trying to make his escape from the room.

"Don't try it!" warned Dick, who divined what was passing in the fellow's mind; "if you try to escape we will shoot you without the least scruple, as we do not intend to let you escape us, under any circumstances. Place your hands behind your back, and turn your back to us!—hurry!"

The young officer hesitated just an instant, and then a look into the stern eyes of Dick and his companions convinced him that it would be dangerous to disobey.

Without another word he placed his hands together, behind his back, and turned his back toward the two.

"Bind his wrists together, Joe," said Dick. "I'll keep him covered, and if he attempts to resist, I will shoot him!"

Joe stuck his pistol back into his belt, and procuring a deerskin thong, tied the young British officer's wrists together securely.

Then he led the prisoner back and seated him before the fireplace.

The expression on the face of the young man had changed. It had been one of self-satisfaction before, but now it was sullenness and anger.

But then, he had cause to feel out of sorts.

He realized now that he had made a fool of himself in being so confiding, and it never makes one feel particularly good to realize anything of this kind.

"Well, now that you have made me a prisoner, what are you going to do with me?" the young man asked, with a sullen air.

"We will soon show you," said Dick, quietly.

Then he relieved the lieutenant of his weapons.

Next he, with Joe's help, proceeded to remove the lieutenant's uniform.

The young officer protested, but it did no good, and seeing this, he presently relapsed into moody silence.

As soon as they had succeeded in removing the lieutenant's uniform, Dick quickly removed his outer clothing, and, with Joe to aid him, assisted by the officer himself, who saw there was no use trying to resist, the youth placed his clothing on the officer's form.

Then he proceeded to don the uniform, the lieutenant's

hands having been bound once more, and suddenly the young Englishman turned pale.

Dick's purpose in donning the uniform flashed upon him.

### CHAPTER III.

"LIEUTENANT MAURICE MERTON."

"You will not dare—" he began, and then paused, almost gasping, so great was his anger and excess of feeling.

"Oh, yes I will!" smiled Dick. "I am going to do that very thing."

"You will be detected, made a prisoner and hanged if you enter the lines of the British army and try to impersonate me!" the lieutenant said. "I am well known to hundreds of the men."

"Thanks for the information," said Dick, quietly; "I shall be all the more careful, then."

He did not believe the lieutenant.

There might be some among the British regiments who would know Lieutenant Merton, but probably not one among the Hessians and Scotchmen who would know him.

And it was among these that Dick intended to go.

"You take your life in your hands if you enter the British encampment!" the lieutenant said, sullenly.

It was evidently his purpose to try to frighten Dick out of the notion of doing what he was figuring on doing.

"It won't be the first time I have taken my life in my hands," said Dick, coolly.

The lieutenant regarded Dick curiously, and then of a sudden he started, and looked at Dick searchingly.

"Are you Dick Slater, the rebel boy spy?" he asked.

"It doesn't matter who I am," replied Dick, coldly; "we have more important business on hand than satisfying the curiosity of a king's soldier."

The lieutenant bit his lips to keep back the angry remark he was about to make.

It galled him to think that he, a British officer, should be forced to listen to such language from a rebel boy.

He upbraided himself bitterly for his foolishness in venturing into this cabin when he was only half an hour from the British encampment.

It was too late to think of it now, however.

He would have to bear it as best he could.

Dick felt in the pockets of the clothing which he had donned, and brought forth some documents addressed to Donop, Rahl and Grant, the officers who had been left in charge of the British army when Howe and Cornwallis left and returned to New York.



"I dare say these are important papers, Joe," said Dick, quietly.

"You may be sure they are!" acquiesced Joe.

Dick held the papers in his hand and looked at them for a few moments.

Suddenly he looked up, and at Joe.

He seemed to be pondering some subject of importance.

"Joe," he said, "these must be taken to the commander-in-chief at once!"

The lieutenant turned pale.

He writhed and twisted in a vain effort to break the bonds binding his wrists together.

The two paid no attention to him.

They well knew his puny strength could not break the deerskin thong.

"You are right," agreed Joe; "the papers must be taken to him at once."

Dick looked around at Lieutenant Merton.

"I'll tell you what you had better do, Joe," said Dick; "you had better take the prisoner and the papers and go across the river and turn both prisoner and papers over to the commander-in-chief. Don't you think so?"

"I do. I will start at once; and you?"

"I will start at once, also—start for the encampment of the British."

Dick spoke quietly, and in the most matter-of-fact manner imaginable.

One to have heard him would have thought he was talking of going on a pleasure trip.

Dick handed the papers to Joe.

"Put them away carefully, Joe," he said. "Whatever you do, don't lose them, and—if you love me, don't let the prisoner escape!"

A grim smile crossed the face of the hunter.

"You needn't be afraid, my boy," he said, decidedly; "he won't escape!"

"All right; now let's be moving."

Dick drew himself up in military fashion and turned around so that his back was toward his companion.

"How does the uniform fit me, Joe?" he asked.

"Fine, my boy; one would never guess it was borrowed. It looks as if it had been made for you."

"Good; I'm glad of that. Now let's be moving. I guess I'll accompany you to the boat and see that you get started across the river all right, Joe."

"Just as you like, my boy; though I'm not afraid but we would make it all right."

"I'll feel better to know that you get safely off, Joe."

"Very well; come along, then."

He stepped forward and took hold of Lieutenant Merton's arm.

"Come with me," he said, quietly. "You had better come quietly and peaceably, for you have got to come!" he added, as the young officer acted as if about to hang back and try to keep from going. "I will tie you, feet as well as hands, and carry you, if you go to trying to make me trouble!"

The young man decided, then, that it would do no good to be stubborn, and he walked along by the side of the hunter.

They left the cabin, Dick coming last and closing the door, and then they started toward the river.

They passed a horse, which was tied to a tree, and the horse whinnied. It was seemingly glad to see some human beings.

The three continued on through the timber, and a few minutes later reached the bank of the river.

Dick assisted Joe in getting the prisoner aboard the boat, and then he waited till his friend had taken the oars and rowed out into the river a ways.

When satisfied that all was well, and that his friend would reach the other shore in safety, Dick turned and made his way back to the cabin.

He did not enter.

He had other business to attend to, and did not wish to lose any time.

He went to where the horse stood, untied the halter-strap and climbed into the saddle.

Then he set out through the timber, going in the direction where, as he knew, lay the encampment of the enemy.

As he rode along, Dick was thinking.

He felt that he could pass himself off for Lieutenant Merton without much trouble, but what was he to do for despatches and orders to the British commanders?

How would he explain not having these?

A thought came to the quick-witted youth.

He could tell the British officers that General Howe was afraid that he might be captured, and had given him verbal instructions, so that in case he was captured by the rebels there would be nothing that the rebels could learn regarding the intentions of the British.

This, as Dick knew in his own experience as a spy, was often done where there was information or orders of a general nature to be taken, as it precluded the possibility of the enemy coming into possession of said information.

Dick wished to report to the Hessian commander, Rahl, as he thought it much less likely that the Hessians would know the lieutenant whom he was to impersonate than the Scotchmen or British.

Dick was also aware that the Hessians were stationed in



Trenton proper, and this would make it easier for him to keep from being captured in case it was discovered that he was a rebel spy instead of the British lieutenant.

The youth rode onward, and twenty minutes later he was halted by a picket.

"Who comes there?" was the cry.

"A friend," replied Dick.

Then he rode forward and told the picket that he was Lieutenant Maurice Merton, from New York, with orders for Colonel Rahl, the Hessian.

"You'll find Rahl down in the town," was the reply. "Ride straight on in the direction you are going."

"Very well," replied Dick, and he rode onward.

He rode right through the outpost of the British camp, and then on still farther till he reached the edge of the town.

He inquired his way of sentinels whom he encountered, and was directed to a two-story brick house, which was pointed out to him as being the headquarters of Colonel Rahl.

Dick dismounted in front of the door, tied his horse and knocked on the door.

"I wish to see Colonel Rahl," Dick said to the negro servant who came to the door; "tell him I come from General Howe with orders."

The servant conducted Dick into a waiting room and told him to be seated, while he went to take the message to the colonel.

Dick seated himself and looked about him.

The room was well furnished, and the youth doubted not that the house belonged to a patriot, and had been confiscated to the use of the Hessian.

Presently the servant returned and told Dick that Colonel Rahl would see him.

Dick rose and followed on the heels of the negro.

"Now, my boy, brace up and stand firm!" said Dick to himself, and he steeled his nerves for the ordeal which was at hand.

In the first place, it was barely possible that the Hessian might have met Lieutenant Merton, and would detect the imposture at the first glance.

And this was the only thing that Dick feared.

If he was not detected he would risk making a blunder and arousing the suspicion of the officer.

Dick made up his mind to be bold, so as the door was thrown open and the negro servant announced "Lieutenant Merton," Dick stepped through the doorway into the room as coolly and composedly as the lieutenant himself could have done.

Dick's eyes were wide open, however, and he watched the face of Colonel Rahl closely without seeming to do so.

The youth knew he could tell whether or not the imposture was detected by the look which would appear on the officer's face at sight of him.

If Colonel Rahl had ever met Lieutenant Merton, his face would depict astonishment at sight of one whom he would know was not the lieutenant.

But the colonel looked up at Dick as the youth entered and there was no look of surprise on his face.

Instead, there was only curiosity, and he remarked inquiringly:

"Lieutenant Merton, what can I do for you?"

"You might invite me to sit down," said Dick, quietly.

He was so relieved at the deception he was practising not being discovered that he could not resist the inclination to be a bit impertinent.

The Hessian merely smiled, however.

He seemed to not be one who was easy to take offense.

"Sit down, lieutenant," he said.

Dick took a seat, and then looked at the colonel with interest.

"You say you come from the commander-in-chief?" asked Rahl.

"Yes, sir," replied Dick.

"That's true, too," he added to himself; "I came straight from the commander-in-chief of the patriot army."

"And you bring orders, you say?"

Dick nodded.

"I do," he said.

The Hessian colonel looked at the youth for a few moments in silence, and then said:

"Where are they?"

Dick tapped his forehead.

"In here," he said, quietly.

"Ah! they are verbal orders, then?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, I am ready to receive the orders."

"They are very simple. He said you are to remain here until the river freezes over, and then cross on the ice and annihilate the rebels."

"He told us that much before he left for New York."

"Well, he wished to stamp it on your mind firmly, I suppose. He said that he did not think it would be necessary for him to return, and he leaves it to you to do as he orders."

"I shall obey orders to the letter; and as soon as it is so that we can get across the river we will go over and finish this war up very quickly."

"You may think you will do so," thought Dick, "but I guess General Washington will have something to say about it!"

Aloud he said:



"I have no doubt you will be able to do as you say, Colonel Rahl. And now, where will I find quarters?"

"In a house up the street a few doors. A number of officers are quartered there, and they will welcome a newcomer to their midst."

"Are the officers English or Hessian?" asked Dick.

"They are mostly Hessian," was the reply; "you do not object to being quartered with the Hessian officers?" the last with a half-angry look.

"Oh, no; I had as lieve be quartered with them as not, Colonel Rahl," said Dick, promptly.

The Hessian's face cleared somewhat at this.

"Here is the number of the house," he said.

He wrote some figures on a piece of paper and handed it to Dick, who took it, and then, saluting, the youth withdrew.

Just as Dick reached the street he came upon a scene which caused his blood to boil with rage.

A beautiful girl of about seventeen or eighteen years stood at bay, while surrounding her were four men in the uniforms of Hessian officers.

One of the officers, a foppish-looking fellow, was importuning the girl to give him a kiss, and as the girl replied with indignant words, refusing, and telling the fellow, truthfully, that he was no gentleman, he in his turn became angry, and suddenly stepped forward and threw his arm around the maiden's waist.

"We'll see now whether or not you can keep from being kissed, my pretty maid!" the fellow cried, in a tone of fiendish exultation, while his companions laughed in glee. "I am going to kiss you, not once, but a dozen times, to repay you for your sauciness!"

A scream escaped the lips of the girl.

"Help!" she cried.

"Oh, there's no help for you, my saucy maid!" with a sneering laugh; "here goes for the kisses!"

The Hessian officer went to take a kiss, but did do it.

He was struck in the jaw a terrible blow and felled to the sidewalk.

Dick had delivered the blow.

"Take that, you cowardly hound!" the youth exclaimed.

A cry of joy went up from the girl.

"Oh, sir, I thank you!" she cried, in a sweet, musical voice.

Then a little cry escaped her, as she saw the three men leap forward to attack the brave youth who had befriended her.

She thought the young stranger would be overpowered and beaten into insensibility at once.

But she did not know Dick Slater.

Neither, for that matter, did the young Hessian officers.

They had swords at their sides, but they did not offer to draw the weapons.

Doubtless they thought that three of them would be amply able to handle the one youth.

So they attacked him with their fists.

But they were dealing with no common youth, and they quickly found it out.

Dick knocked the three down, one after the other, but so quickly and swiftly as to make it a wonderful feat, and the girl stared at the young stranger in amazement and admiration.

The first officer who had been knocked down had struggled to his feet by this time, and he leaped forward with a snarl of rage.

As he advanced he was making frantic efforts to draw his sword, but his very excitement and haste defeated his object, and the weapon for some reason hung in the scabbard, refusing to come forth. The result was that Dick had ample opportunity to deal the fellow another blow, and he did it promptly, knocking the man down a second time.

The other three were scrambling up now, and they, too, were attempting to draw weapons when Dick whipped out a pair of pistols and, leveling them, cried, sternly:

"Don't you do it! Don't draw your weapons, or I shall be forced to shoot you! Hands away from there, please!"

The officers took their hands away from their sword-hilts in a hurry.

The other man had struggled to his feet again by this time, and he shook his fist at Dick and cried:

"I'll have your life for this, you infernal scoundrel, but I'll take it in the regular way, if you are not a coward and a cur! Your name, sir! Give me your name!"

"Lieutenant Maurice Merton, at your service!" replied Dick, promptly; "and I shall be willing and glad to give you satisfaction at some future time and place, as may be decided upon."

"You will hear from me to-morrow, sir! You will hear from me to-morrow!"

Then the four men turned and strode away, muttering threats in a manner that frightened the girl, who said:

## CHAPTER IV.

### DICK FINDS A FRIEND.

A cry of anger and astonishment went up from the fallen man's companions.



"Oh, sir, you have gotten yourself into serious trouble on my account! I am so sorry!"

"Don't worry an instant on my account, miss," said Dick, with a smile; "I shall lose no sleep on account of having made enemies of those scoundrels."

"But they are dangerous men. They will force you into a duel and kill you."

"That is a game that two can play at, miss," smiled Dick. "I am not afraid of them."

"You must not fight that man, kind sir!" the girl cried; "I know him, and he has the reputation of being a deadly duellist. He has, I understand, fought three duels since the army has been here in Trenton, and he killed one antagonist and seriously wounded the other two."

"It does not matter, miss," said Dick, quietly; "dismiss him from your thoughts. Which way do you live from here? Shall I not see you safely home?"

"If you please, Lieutenant Merton," was the reply.

Dick and the girl walked down the street, conversing as they went, and when they had gone three or four blocks the girl paused in front of a well-built and substantial-looking house.

"Here is where I live," she said, her voice being sweet and musical; "I would invite you in, Lieutenant Merton, were it not that I—that my father—is a—a—"

The girl stammered and hesitated.

"Is what, miss?" asked Dick, gently and kindly.

"My father is a patriot, what you would term a 'rebel,' Lieutenant Merton," was the low-voiced reply; "and he is bitterly opposed to the British, and I am afraid he might—might insult you if I were to have you enter. Still, as you protected me from those insulting Hessians, he might treat you with courtesy, as he hates the Hessians worse than the British. If you are willing to risk it, I shall be glad to have you enter."

This was very welcome information for Dick.

Of course, the girl could not suspect it, but he was glad to run across a patriot in the heart of the British lines. The youth thought that the time might come, and soon, when he would wish to have a friend at hand, and he decided to go into the house with the girl, make her father's acquaintance, and, if favorably impressed with him, make a confidant of him. Thus he would be sure of having a haven of refuge to retire to in case his identity was discovered and he had to flee.

"I shall be glad to take the risk, miss," said Dick, with such earnestness that the girl blushed. "I would take far greater risks for such a privilege!"

"Come, then," said the girl, her voice trembling slightly; "and remember, Lieutenant Merton, that although, like my

father, I am a patriot, still I know that there are many true men and gentlemen among the British, and you are sure of a genuine and hearty welcome from me!"

"Thank you, miss!" said Dick.

The girl knocked on the door and a few moments later it was opened by a handsome lady of about forty years.

Dick knew this was the girl's mother, even before she spoke.

"So you are back, Mildred?" the lady said, in a tone of relief. "We were beginning to be uneasy; but who is this gentleman?"

"This is Lieutenant Merton, mother," was the reply, spoken rapidly. "He has rendered me a great service—risked his life to protect me from insult, mother, and—and—I invited him to enter, so that you and father could thank him."

Dick was secretly somewhat amused, but he kept his face perfectly grave.

The woman hesitated, and then suddenly making up her mind, she said to Dick:

"Pray come in, Lieutenant Merton. We, of course, wish to thank you for what you have done for our daughter; come in."

Dick lifted his hat and bowed.

"Thank you, lady," he said, and then he entered.

The woman closed the door and bolted it, and led the way to the parlor, where Dick took a seat.

Mother and daughter then excused themselves and withdrew. The daughter wished to tell her mother the story and prejudice her in Dick's favor, and then get her aid in influencing the husband and father so that he would treat Dick with courtesy, even though he were a hated redcoat.

Dick, having nothing else to do, looked around him.

The room he was in was well-furnished, and he decided that the owner of the house must be pretty well-to-do.

He only had to wait a few minutes, however; then he heard footsteps approaching along the hall.

Then Mildred and her mother entered, followed by a handsome, but rather severe-looking man.

"Father, this is Lieutenant Merton, the young gentleman of whom I have been telling you. He saved me from being insulted by some Hessian officers, and has, I fear, gotten himself into deep trouble as a result, for one of them said he would challenge the lieutenant. Lieutenant Merton, my father, Austin Marshall, who will, I know, extend to you his sincere thanks for the service which you have rendered his daughter."

"She's as bright as she is beautiful," thought Dick. "She is practically forcing her father to do as she wishes."



Mr. Marshall advanced, and pausing in front of Dick, looked at him keenly.

Then he said, in cold, measured tones:

"Lieutenant Merton, I am extremely sorry to be put under obligations to anyone wearing the livery of a king whom I hate, and whom I have repudiated and hope never again to be subject to. Under the circumstances I can do no less than thank you, but I do not wish you to presume and think that on account of this you will have a claim on our hospitality. I tell you frankly that no one wearing a red coat is welcome within these four walls, and when you have gone forth from here I must ask that you do not return at a future time, as you will not be admitted."

"Oh, father!" said Mildred, reproachfully.

The eyes of the beautiful girl were filled with tears, and her voice trembled.

"I mean it, Mildred!" in a stern voice.

"But think, father, what the young gentleman has done for us—what we owe him! He has risked his life, and indeed it is still in danger, as he will be challenged tomorrow."

"I know," in a cold voice, "but it was his duty to protect you, for but for the fact that King George is warring upon us, those Hessian officers who insulted you would not have been here to do so. I can't see that we should have to consider ourselves as being under obligations to Lieutenant Merton by rights, at all."

The wife and mother, as well as the daughter, seemed to be somewhat distressed. They realized that they owed a great deal to the handsome youth, and they felt bad because their husband and father was so stiff, almost gruff. He might have treated the young man a little more courteously, they thought, even though the young man was an officer in the British army.

As for Dick, he stood there, facing Mr. Marshall, a half-smile upon his face. He was as cool as could be, and did not seem a bit put out on account of being talked to in such a frank manner.

Mildred was about to speak again and protest against her father's statement of the case, but Dick made a restraining gesture.

"Wait, Miss Marshall," he said, with a smile. "Your father is right—entirely and wholly right. King George is to blame for the war, the Hessians are here as a result of the existence of the war, and I, like your father, claim that it is the duty of any man, be he rebel or loyalist, to protect a lady if subjected to insult; and he is not entitled to, nor should he expect, thanks for doing what should be considered a

privilege. It was a pleasure to me to be of service to you, Miss Marshall, and if there be obligation one way or another, then the obligation is mine."

Dick was a good judge of faces, and he was sure he saw a look of approval, as well as surprise, in the eyes of the man.

"Well said, young man, and even though you are a redcoat I will break my rule and offer you my hand!" said Mr. Marshall, and a look of pleasure appeared on the face of Mrs. Marshall, while the eyes of the daughter fairly shone with delight.

Dick accepted the proffered hand and shook it heartily. The man could not, of course, understand Dick's feelings in the matter, not knowing that the youth was, like himself, a strong patriot. Dick could have hugged the stern-faced man—and, for that matter, the whole family—and he made up his mind to confide in Mr. Marshall. He might want to take refuge in the house soon, and if the man knew he was a patriot the doors would be open to Dick at any and all times.

"Mr. Marshall," said Dick, quietly, when they were through shaking hands, "I would like to see you privately a few minutes, if convenient."

"Certainly, Lieutenant Merton," was the prompt reply; "come with me to the library."

Then they excused themselves to the ladies and withdrew, the mother and daughter looking after them wonderingly, and then at each other inquiringly.

They were, naturally, surprised, and wondered why Dick wished to see Mr. Marshall privately.

They supposed they would be enlightened on the return of the two, however, and they sat resignedly down to wait.

As soon as they had become seated in the library, Dick told Mr. Marshall who he was, how he came to be there, and all about it, and to say that the gentleman was pleased when he learned that Dick was, like himself, a strong patriot, is putting it mildly.

He was delighted, and told Dick he would do everything he could to assist him in gathering information that would be of benefit to the commander-in-chief of the Continental Army.

They talked together half an hour or more, and then returned to the parlor.

Dick was smiling, and Mr. Marshall's face fairly beamed.

"I make an exception in favor of this redcoat," said he, smiling and addressing his wife and daughter. "He is to be a welcome visitor at this house at any and all times, and you, either of you, will refuse to admit him at risk of incurring my direst displeasure!"



## CHAPTER V.

## FRIENDS AMONG ENEMIES.

The mother and daughter looked at Mr. Marshall, at Dick and then at each other in wide-eyed wonder.

They could not understand it at all.

They would never have believed it possible that their husband and father would ever become so friendly to anyone wearing a red coat.

They were pleased, however.

Women look more at the man than at anything which he may be identified with, and they had taken a great liking to Dick.

He was handsome and manly-looking, and, moreover, he had saved Mildred from insult at the hands of the Hessian officer.

A smile appeared on the beautiful and expressive face of Mildred.

"You need not be afraid that we will refuse admittance to Lieutenant Merton, father!" she said, with an expressive look in Dick's direction. "We owe him too much to think of doing such a thing."

"You are right, Mildred," said her mother; "Lieutenant Merton will always be welcome."

Dick bowed toward both the ladies.

"Thanks!" he said; "that I shall appreciate the favor so kindly and generously shown you may be assured."

Dick conversed with the three for a few minutes and then said:

"I must go now. My faithful horse is standing out in the cold, in front of Colonel Rahl's headquarters, and I must not let him suffer. I will cut short my visit now, and come again when I will be able to stay longer."

"We shall be pleased to have you come at any time," said Mrs. Marshall.

"Yes, indeed!" said Mildred, so earnestly that in spite of herself she blushed slightly.

"And you, Mr. Marshall?" said Dick, turning toward the gentleman with a smile.

The mother and daughter looked at him quickly.

They seemed slightly anxious, and it was evident that they were not sure yet that he would stick to what he had said:

Mr. Marshall extended his hand, which Dick grasped.

"You will be very welcome, Lieutenant Merton," he said, and he emphasized the "Lieutenant Merton" slightly, and gave the youth a significant look.

"Thank you!" said Dick, with an answering look.

"One word before you go, Lieutenant Merton," said Mildred. "That—that man who insulted me said that he would challenge you on the morrow. Is there no way that you can keep from having to fight him?"

There was an eager, anxious look on the girl's face as she spoke, and it was evident that she was considerably wrought up over the fact that the youth was likely to be forced into a duel in which he might lose his life as a result of interfering in her behalf and extending protection to her.

"I should not think you would be called upon to meet a scoundrel such as he has proved himself to be," said Mrs. Marshall.

"Well, it is this way," said Dick, quietly; "if I should refuse to meet him I should be branded as a coward and would be avoided by all the other officers, and would be sneered at and jeered and made sport of until life would be unendurable. No, I shall have to fight the fellow if he challenges me; but you need have no fears on my account. If we fight, it will result merely in giving me an opportunity to teach the scoundrel a very much needed lesson. I shall rather enjoy it than otherwise."

"He certainly needs a lesson badly," said Mrs. Marshall; "but he might succeed in inflicting a death wound upon you, Lieutenant Merton. If there is any way that you can get out of the affair I should advise you to do it. It will be safer and better, and it would be terrible for a gentleman like yourself to fall a victim to the prowess of a scoundrel like that man."

"There is no way to avoid a meeting if he challenges me," said Dick; "and, as I have said, you need have no fears for me. I have none for myself."

There was a look of admiration in the beautiful face and in the eyes of Mildred as she looked at Dick.

A woman usually admires courage in a man, and a maiden in far greater degree.

"But you will be very, very careful, Lieutenant Merton," she said in a voice which trembled; "you will take no chances whatever?"

"Oh, I will promise you that," with a smile. "I do not intend that a scoundrel such as the fellow proved himself to be shall get the better of me in any way, and I will be even more cautious than I should be were I dealing with an honorable man."

"That is a good idea," said Mr. Marshall, approvingly. "Such fellows will take an advantage if they get the chance."

"Yes, indeed; that is their stock in trade—taking advantage of anybody and everybody at each and every opportunity," replied Dick.

Dick bade them good-night now, and took his departure.



all three shaking hands with him and pressing him to call on the next evening.

Mildred let her soft little hand rest in Dick's for a few moments and then she said, "Be careful—for my sake. If you should fall I should feel almost like a murderess, for it would be on my account, you know."

"I will be careful," Dick replied, and then he went out and made his way back to the headquarters of Colonel Rahl.

The horse Dick had ridden into the British lines was still standing there, and, untying the halter-strap, Dick led the animal along until he came to the house where he was to be quartered.

He tied the horse, and, running up the steps, knocked on the door.

To the servant who came to the door he said:

"I am Lieutenant Merton, and was sent here by Colonel Rahl. My horse stands there; who will take care of him?"

"I will see dat yoh horse is taken car' of, sah," was the reply. "Will you go to a room at once, sah?"

"If you please," said Dick.

The man conducted Dick up a flight of stairs and along a hall, and ushered him into a room. Then he lighted a candle, and, turning to Dick, said, with a grin:

"I guesses yo' will be able to git 'long now, sah. De orsifers is mos'ly young gemmens, an' dey does purty much whut dey likes; an' all yo' has to do is go down into de pahlor an' librery an' make yo'se'f at home."

"I'll get along all right, I guess. What is your name, did you say?"

"Tom, sah."

"Tom, eh? Well, Tom, here is something for you," and Dick gave the darky a silver piece, which was accepted with alacrity and the display of a fine set of ivories.

"T'ank yo', boss; uf dere's ennyt'ing I can do foh yo', jes' lemme know an' I'll do hit."

"All right, Tom; you may be able to render me some assistance one way or another, sooner or later. If I should need it, I'll let you know."

"T'ank yo', boss; I'll be right dar when yo' wants me!"

"That's a bright coon, and he might be of use to me," thought Dick, as the darky took his departure. "A fellow can't have too many friends when he is playing such a game as I am engaged in."

Dick remained in the room for a while, thinking the situation over, and then, hearing the sounds of laughter and loud talking downstairs, he decided to go down and make the acquaintance of some of the officers quartered in the house at once.

"I may be able to make a friend or two," he thought;

"and if the duel is forced upon me by that scoundrelly Hessian I will have to have at least one friend to act for me."

The thought of the duel did not worry Dick.

If the Hessian challenged him, the youth intended to choose pistols as the weapons, and he was confident that the fellow could not be his master with the pistol.

And Dick had been under fire too often and faced death in individual contests too frequently to be daunted by the prospect of having to meet a man in a duel.

Dick left the room, and, going downstairs, entered a room opening off from the hall.

The room was a large one, was well lighted, and was occupied when Dick entered by perhaps twenty officers.

A quick glance revealed to the youth's critical eyes the fact that the majority of the officers were Hessians. There were three or four Englishmen, however, and Dick was glad of that.

Another thing which Dick's quick eyes took note of was the fact that his antagonists of the street encounter were present.

Dick knew this, as he had gotten a very fair look at the faces of the fellows, and their bunged-up and swollen countenances were ample evidence that their owners had been engaged in some kind of a game of fisticuffs.

The four were seated together at a table and were drinking and smoking.

They glanced up as Dick entered—as, indeed, did all those present—and a dark look of anger appeared on their faces.

They looked at each other significantly.

Then one—he was the fellow who had insulted Mildred Marshall—arose and strode forward and confronted Dick, who paused and regarded the angry Hessian calmly and without so much as the quiver of an eyelash.

"I believe you are Lieutenant Merton, are you not?" almost hissed the Hessian, glaring at Dick.

"At your service," nodded Dick, coldly.

"Then I will serve you thus, Lieutenant Merton!" grated the Hessian, and as he spoke he slapped Dick's face with the flat of his hand.

A murmur went up from those present, and a little cry of "Bravo!" from the fellow's three cronies.

But they had not much time for remark.

Dick acted promptly.

"And I will serve you thus, you cowardly scoundrel!" said Dick, with sudden fierceness, and quick as the lightning's flash, almost, his right fist shot out, and, taking the Hessian between the eyes, caused him to measure his length on the floor with a crash.

A gasp escaped all present, and the fellow's friends leaped



to their feet, as if with the intention of rushing to the assistance of the fallen man.

He struggled to his feet before they could come forward, however, and instead of making a move to attack Dick, who was ready for him, he hissed:

"You will have to meet me!"

"At any time or place!" was the calm, cold reply.

"My friend, Captain Schlumpf, will wait upon you to-morrow."

"As you will," with a bow. "Perhaps I shall be able to find someone who will act for me in this matter?" and Dick glanced at the other officers present.

A rather good-looking young fellow in the dress of a lieutenant stepped forward and extended his hand to Dick.

"I am Lieutenant Pierson," he said, quietly, and rather cordially; "I am glad to make the acquaintance of Lieutenant Merton, and beg leave to offer my services to act for you in the matter under discussion."

Dick took the young lieutenant's hand and shook it heartily.

"Thank you, Lieutenant Pierson," said he; "I am only too glad to avail myself of your kind offer. I shall depend upon you, and will leave everything to your discretion."

"Thank you. I will look after your interests as if they were my own."

"Thank you! I am sure of that," said Dick.

"Come," said Dick's new friend; "I will introduce you to some of the boys. The majority of them are Hessians, but they are not all bad fellows on that account. Sikoff, Schlumpf and the others are not representative, I assure you."

"Sikoff—is that the name of the man whom I—who is to meet me?" asked Dick.

Lieutenant Pierson looked at Dick in astonishment.

"On the verge of fighting a duel with a man and not know his name?" he exclaimed. "Well, this is remarkable! How does it happen? How came you to be enemies?"

Sikoff, Schlumpf and the other two had withdrawn from the room, and Dick told briefly the story of his encounter with Sikoff and his three friends.

"So! Sikoff insulted the daughter of Austin Marshall, eh? And you interfered and gave him a trouncing?—good! But, say, what a rank old rebel Marshall is, anyway! He hates the sight of a red coat worse than a bull does the sight of a red rag!"

"He seems to be prejudiced against them somewhat," smiled Dick.

"You saw him, then?" eagerly.

"Oh, yes; I escorted the young lady home and was invited in, so that her parents might thank me for what I

had done. I didn't care about that, but I had a curiosity to see Mr. Marshall."

"Exactly. Well, you are the first man wearing a red coat who has set foot in that house! Jove! I wish I had been in your shoes. Miss Marshall is the most beautiful young lady I have seen in Trenton, and if we are to stay here and wait for the river to freeze over, I should like nothing better than to try to make a conquest there!"

"She seems to be a very beautiful and pleasant young lady," said Dick, quietly.

"'Beautiful' and 'pleasant?' She is superb, man! But here are the fellows, wanting an introduction," and the young lieutenant introduced Dick to all as "Lieutenant Merton."

"He just arrived an hour ago from New York with despatches for Rahl," the lieutenant explained, "and he had not much more than got here before he was so fortunate as to have the opportunity of protecting Miss Marshall, the rebel's daughter, against Sikoff, Schlumpf and the others, who accosted the young lady on the street and importuned her to favor them with kisses. Isn't he lucky, though? He got to escort the young lady home, and even entered the house!"

The officers listened eagerly, and asked Dick for the story, which he gave them. They congratulated him on his good fortune in getting into the good graces of the daughter and her parents, and it was evident that the majority of the officers were in love with the beautiful Miss Marshall.

"I'd gladly take your place and fight Sikoff to-morrow if it would make me a welcome caller at the home of Miss Marshall!" said one officer, smilingly.

A number of the others said the same thing, and it was evident that they meant it, too.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE DUEL.

Dick was on very pleasant terms with the officers.

The Hessians were cordial, for it was an open secret that Sikoff and his cronies were not well liked, they being scoundrels at heart, and were constantly doing things of which the other officers did not approve.

Then, too, the prompt and effective manner in which Dick had floored Sikoff had earned the respect of the men.

They realized that the young lieutenant—as they supposed him to be—was a brave youth, and bravery always commands respect.



Dick was handsome, frank-faced and pleasant of manner, too, which prepossessed the officers in his favor.

Dick was pressed to drink and smoke, as the majority of those present were addicted to those habits, but he declined, saying that he never indulged in either wine or cigars.

"How about cards, Merton?" asked Lieutenant Pierson; "of course you play cards?"

Dick shook his head.

"No, I do not play cards," he replied.

"Well, well! Then I think I shall quit all three habits, since it seems that a fellow who does none of those things has better luck with the fair sex!" and Lieutenant Pierson laughed heartily.

The others expressed surprise at Dick's not smoking, drinking or playing cards, but they did not seem to think the less of him for it.

"It is as well that the lieutenant should not drink, anyway, on the eve of an encounter with Sikoff," said one of the officers. "Sikoff is a splendid swordsman—or will you choose the sword, Lieutenant Merton?"

"I haven't given the matter much thought," Dick replied, carelessly. "I think, however, that I shall choose pistols. I am a very fair swordsman, but I never liked the weapon overmuch."

"If you are more skillful with the pistol than with the saber, by all means choose the pistol," the officer replied; "I am sure the saber is Sikoff's favorite weapon, and if you throw him out of that you will have an advantage to start with."

"I am more skillful with the pistol," said Dick.

"Then pistols it shall be!" declared Lieutenant Pierson.

Dick remained in the room, talking with the officers for an hour, and then retired to his room, Lieutenant Pierson accompanying him, as he wished to talk the matter of the coming duel over with Dick.

He remained half an hour, and the matter was thoroughly discussed, so that there could be no misunderstanding in the future.

Lieutenant Pierson got Dick's views, and was ready to arrange things to suit his principal.

When the lieutenant had gone, Dick sat and pondered the situation for a few minutes.

"This is rather an odd situation," he mused. "Here am I, a patriot spy and soldier, masquerading as a lieutenant in the British army, and mixed up in an affair of honor with a Hessian officer. Well, if I can only secure the information I wish, so that General Washington may know just what to do, I shall be well satisfied, and count it well worth the risk."

Then Dick thought of Mildred Marshall, the maiden for

whose sake he had become imbroiled in the affair with Sikoff.

"She's a sweet, beautiful girl," he thought; "but not so sweet or beautiful as Alice—my little sweetheart, Alice!"

Alice Estabrook, Bob's sister, was the girl Dick had reference to, and the youth loved her dearly, and although Mildred Marshall was sweet and beautiful, as he said, there was no danger that she would rob Alice of the place of honor in Dick's heart.

Then, dismissing all the unpleasant thoughts from his mind, Dick went to bed.

"I must get a good night's rest," he thought; "for I am probably in for a lively day to-morrow."

And in this he was right.

He was aroused at an early hour next morning by a cautious but persistent knocking at his door.

"Merton! Merton!" called a voice, which Dick at first did not recognize. "Let me in. I've got it all arranged!"

Then Dick knew who it was.

"It's Lieutenant Pierson!" he thought; "and he probably refers to the duel. Well, I hope it is to be this morning, so as to have it over with and out of the way. Then I can turn my attention to securing information regarding the location of the British forces, the number of the men and everything of that kind."

Dick leaped out of bed and began to dress rapidly.

"In just a moment, Lieutenant Pierson," called Dick, and the other answered, "All right."

Presently Dick was dressed, and then he opened the door.

It was Lieutenant Pierson, and his eyes were shining with satisfaction.

"It's all settled, Merton," he said. "The meeting is to take place this morning, at a point we know of at a safe distance from here; and it is to be pistols at ten paces. That suits, eh, old fellow?"

"Perfectly, Pierson, and thank you for your kindness," said Dick. "I'm glad it is to be this morning. Just wait till I give my face a plunge in a bowl of cold water; then I'll be ready to go with you."

"Good enough! How's your nerve this morning, Merton—steady?"

"As a rock!" with a smile, and Dick held out his hand to prove his words.

Not a tremor or quiver of the hand could be discerned.

"If your hand is as steady as that when you face Sikoff, pistol in hand, I pity him!" said Pierson, enthusiastically. "Say, you are all right, Merton, and I'm proud that you are an Englishman! You'll teach that Hessian a lesson he has long been needing."



"I shall try to do so," with a quiet smile.

Dick wondered what his friend would say if he knew the truth—that he was not an Englishman at all, or even a Tory, but a rank "rebel."

"He would be surprised," thought Dick; "but I don't believe he would refuse to act for me, even if he knew the truth."

Which was true. The young lieutenant had never acted as second in an affair of honor before, and he was somewhat elevated on account of being in this one.

Dick soon finished making his toilet, and announced that he was ready to go.

"Come down to the dining-room," said Pierson; "I hired the cook to have a hot cup of coffee and a couple of sandwiches ready for you. You will feel the better for having a little something of the kind to fortify you against the cold."

"You are thoughtful and kind, Pierson," said Dick. "I think it will do me good to have a cup of coffee before going out."

They made their way down to the dining-room, and Dick ate a sandwich and drank a cup of strong coffee.

"I feel fine as silk," he said, as he rose from the table. "Let us go at once, Pierson."

They left the house, Lieutenant Pierson first having gone to his room and secured a pair of fine duelling-pistols which he had brought with him from England. These were hidden under a long cloak which he wore, and as he and Dick walked along they were not calculated to excite suspicion.

Those who saw them doubtless supposed they were a couple of young blades who had been up all night, and were walking out in the brisk morning air to get braced up.

Lieutenant Pierson led the way, and presently they left the town and entered the timber.

The lieutenant did not hesitate.

He seemed to know where he was bound for, and walked steadily onward.

Dick kept at his side, and they did not indulge in much in the way of conversation.

At last they emerged from the timber into a glade of perhaps an acre in extent.

There was no one there.

"We are first on the ground," said Lieutenant Pierson. "I am glad of that, as it will give them no chance to say that we were afraid to come."

"True," said Dick. "Well, I hope they will be along soon."

"So do I."

They were not kept waiting long.

Presently three men entered the glade.

They were Sikoff, Schlumpf and a surgeon.

The three approached and were greeted with courtesy.

Then Pierson and Schlumpf went to one side and began talking in low tones.

Presently Pierson returned, got the pistols and took them back to where Schlumpf stood.

The captain took the pistols, looked at them frowningly, turned them over and over, and then, handing them back to Pierson, went to Sikoff and, taking him to one side, talked with him for a few minutes.

Then he went back and held a short conversation with Pierson, after which the lieutenant came to Dick, and, taking him aside, said:

"Schlumpf wanted I should come and ask you if you would apologize for knocking Sikoff down, Merton. He says that if you will do so they will call it square, and no blood need be spilled. It looks to me as if they were scared. What do you think?"

Dick was silent a few moments, and then said:

"It looks a little bit that way, Pierson."

"It's the pistols that have done it," the lieutenant said. "He is afraid he isn't your equal as a shot, and would like to get out of the meeting. If you had said sabers it would have been different."

Dick studied a few moments.

"I'll tell you, Pierson," he said, quietly, "I have no particular desire to shoot the fellow, but the quarrel is not of my making, and as for me apologizing, why, I have nothing to apologize for—unless it might be because I didn't hit the fellow harder. If there is any apologizing done, it will have to come from him, not from me, and you can go and tell that worthy second so at once. I want to have this thing over with as quickly as possible."

Pierson patted Dick on the shoulder.

"Good boy!" he said, approvingly. "I was sure you wouldn't hear to such a thing, and told Schlumpf so. I'll go and repeat it, however, so they will know we mean it."

Pierson hastened back to where Schlumpf stood, and told him what Dick had said.

"Your man will have to fight, Schlumpf," said Pierson, coolly. "So he might as well make up his mind to it first as last. Shall we load the pistols?"

"My man has no desire to try to get out of fighting," growled Schlumpf.

"No?" in a tone that implied doubt. "Let's get down to business, then."

"I am ready."

He excused himself to go and tell Sikoff of the failure of



their plan, however, and then when he had returned the pistols were loaded by Pierson, Schlumpf watching, to see that everything was done right.

"Now, choose your weapon," said the lieutenant, and the Hessian chose one of the pistols at random.

"There is no choice," he said, which was true.

Next, the ten paces were stepped off, and the two principals took their places.

Pierson handed Dick the pistol he was to use, and Schlumpf did the same for Sikoff.

The seconds now tossed up a silver piece to see which should say the word, and it fell to Pierson.

"Now then, gentlemen, listen to me," he said. "I will say 'Make ready,' 'Take aim,' 'Fire.' At the word 'fire' you are to fire, and not before. Do you understand?"

Both principals bowed.

Dick was as cool as ever he was in his life.

Somehow he did not feel at all nervous.

It did not seem to him as though he were about to take part in an affair which might end in his death.

It did not impress him that way at all.

Sikoff, however, was very pale.

He looked frightened.

He was evidently very nervous and ill at ease, for he fidgeted about.

Dick looked straight into the fellow's eyes, and smiled the scorn which he felt for the scoundrel.

"A man who would be guilty of insulting and frightening an unprotected woman on the street could not be other than a coward, and a most arrant one," he thought, and he saw that the man was being punished now, even before a weapon had been aimed at him.

Dick's cool and contemptuous stare seemed to take what little courage there had been left in Sikoff clear out of him, and he trembled.

"He couldn't hit a barn at ten paces, the shape he is in now," thought Dick. "Well, where shall I hit him? I don't wish to kill him, of course. But I will wound him and teach him a lesson."

Dick made up his mind to aim at Sikoff's shoulder. That would make a somewhat severe, but not necessarily dangerous wound.

Then the voice of Pierson was heard:

"Make ready!"

Dick and Sikoff lifted their pistols and held them out in front of them, the muzzles pointing toward each other.

"Take aim!"

Both took aim.

"Fire!"

Both fired at the word, the two reports sounding as one.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE RESULT OF THE DUEL.

Dick was not hit, but he heard the whirr of the bullet as it whizzed past his head.

His aim had been true, however.

His bullet took effect in Sikoff's shoulder, and the Hessian fell forward to the ground with a cry of pain.

The surgeon hastened to Sikoff's side, as did Schlumpf also, and Pierson ran to Dick, and shook his hand heartily and congratulated him.

"You are not wounded at all, old fellow?" he asked.

"No; he missed me altogether. His intentions were good, however, as I heard the bullet whistle past my ear."

The two waited till the surgeon had made his examination of Sikoff's wound, and Dick sent Pierson to ask how severe it was.

"It is painful and somewhat severe, but not necessarily dangerous," said Pierson when he came back.

"Good; I'm glad of that," said Dick. "I didn't want to be the means of ending the fellow's earthly career."

The surgeon approached the two.

"I have a buggy over here a little ways," he said; "would you assist us in getting Captain Sikoff to it?"

"Certainly," replied Dick.

The four got the wounded man to the buggy and into it, and then the surgeon and Schlumpf got in, and, bowing to Dick and Pierson, drove slowly away.

The two started back to Trenton afoot, and talked of the duel as they went.

"You did splendidly, Merton!" said Pierson, enthusiastically. "Jove! one would almost think you had fought a duel before breakfast every day for months, you were so cool and confident!"

"Well, there was no use of getting in a stew, Pierson," said Dick. "That wouldn't keep Sikoff from hitting me, and it would conduce to make my own aim bad."

"True, but there are not many who have such control of themselves."

The two reached their quarters in time for breakfast, and the absence of Sikoff and Schlumpf was noticed at once by the other officers.

They became suspicious, and commenced questioning Dick and Pierson.



Dick merely smiled and would say nothing, but Pierson was not so backward. He told the whole story, and the officers congratulated Dick in no measured terms.

"Jove! how I should have liked to have been present at the meeting!" said one.

"And I!" from another.

"I think it was rather mean of you, Pierson, to keep the matter secret and slip off from us in such fashion!" from still another.

But Pierson only laughed.

"That's all right," he said. "That was the way to do it. You don't suppose I was under any obligations to go around to your doors and pound my knuckles off trying to wake you up, do you?"

"Say, I'm glad you pinked Sikoff, Merton; I am for a fact," said an officer; "he has been needing a lesson for quite a while, and I'm glad he has had it at last."

The affair made Dick quite a lion.

He was the observed of all observers when he went out on the streets after breakfast, as the news of the duel had spread like wildfire.

Lieutenant Pierson kept with Dick. He felt that part of the credit for making a success of the affair was due to him, and he could, besides, share Dick's glory in a measure, by reflection.

Now, Dick didn't care anything about the duel.

He would have preferred not to hear anything more about it.

But as it had been the means of putting him on a good footing, and was making friends for him on every side, he did not mind it so much.

It made it easier for him to do the work that he had come to the British encampment to do, too, for he had but to give Pierson a hint that he would like to see the different divisions of the army, to be led off for that purpose, though Pierson did it because he wished to parade around with the hero of the morning's duel.

Dick was afraid he might be recognized by some of the officers among the British, but none of them seemed to know Lieutenant Merton, and Dick was glad of it.

Dick put in almost the entire day going here, there and everywhere, within the British and Hessian encampments, and he got a splendid idea of the location of the forces and the number of the men.

"I can draw a perfect plan of the encampment, placing every detachment of troops," thought Dick; "and that is exactly what General Washington wants."

When evening came, Dick was very well satisfied, indeed, with his day's work.

After the evening meal had been eaten he went to his

room and spruced up a bit, after which he came down, and, leaving the house, made his way to the home of Mr. Marshall.

He was ushered into the parlor by a servant, and a few moments later Mr. Marshall and his wife and daughter entered the room and greeted the youth pleasantly.

Mildred looked at Dick eagerly and anxiously, and he knew she was wondering whether or not he had escaped unscathed from his encounter with Sikoff.

Dick supposed, of course, that they had heard about the duel.

But they had not.

Mr. Marshall, in compliance with his wife's wishes, kept pretty close at home, and they had not heard the news of the duel.

They inquired eagerly as to whether or not it was to be, and when Dick told them it was a thing of the past they expressed their gratification and pleasure in no measured terms.

Mildred's eyes fairly shone with delight when she learned that the duel was over, and that Dick had escaped without a scratch.

"I'm glad you gave that scoundrel a severe wound!" said Mr. Marshall; "such fellows should be fixed so that they will have to take to their beds and stay there. They can't do any deviltry when they are in bed, helpless."

They talked for an hour or more, pleasantly, and then Mr. Marshall rose and invited Dick to go back into the library with him.

They excused themselves to the ladies, and left the room, and as soon as they were in the library Mr. Marshall asked Dick if he had discovered much that would be of benefit to the commander-in-chief of the Continental army.

Dick told him that he had discovered a great deal that would be of benefit to General Washington, and then Mr. Marshall gave the youth some added information that would be likely to be of benefit.

They talked half an hour or so, and then returned to the parlor.

Mildred and her mother were undoubtedly curious regarding the business the two could have with each other, but they asked no questions.

They were glad to see the two on such friendly terms.

Dick remained another hour and then bade them good-night and took his departure.

He returned to his quarters and entered the room where the officers were gathered, and his entrance was greeted with cheery words of welcome.

"See! the conquering hero comes!" cried Pierson; "and he is a conquering hero in more ways than one, for he has



I will warrant you, just returned from the home of Miss Mildred Marshall. Own up, now, Merton, is it not true?" he asked, with a laugh.

Dick smiled and nodded.

"Yes, I have been calling at the home of the Marshalls," he said. "I promised that I would call there this evening when I left there yesterday evening, and I make it a rule to always keep my word, if such a thing is possible."

"Especially when there is a beautiful maiden in the affair," laughed Pierson. "Well, Merton, you are a lucky dog! There is not a man here who would not give considerable to be in your shoes—eh, fellows?"

"That's right!" in a chorus of voices.

They were talking and laughing and enjoying themselves, as was the custom among the officers, when suddenly the door from the hall opened and a young man entered.

The young man seemed somewhat excited, and all eyes were turned upon him inquiringly.

At sight of the newcomer Dick's heart gave a quick throb. He recognized him.

The young man was Lieutenant Merton, whom he was impersonating!

Dick was greatly surprised.

The young man had escaped from within the American lines, where Joe Saunders, the hunter, had taken him, a prisoner.

How he had managed to do it, Dick could not imagine, but that, of course, was immaterial.

He had escaped, and that was enough; and now that he had appeared here it meant trouble for him—possibly capture, and death by shooting or hanging.

It was the rule to make short work of spies.

The eyes of the young man roved about rapidly, and when they fell upon Dick their owner gave utterance to a cry of anger and delight commingled.

"Ah! there you are!" he cried, leaping forward, his face flaming angrily; "there you are, you cursed rebel spy and hypocrite!"

He pointed his finger at Dick as he spoke.

The officers stared at the young man in wondering amazement, and then they looked inquiringly at Dick.

The youth was calm and composed.

Dick had perfect control of himself and was as cool as could be.

He met the wild, angry look of the real Lieutenant Merton calmly and unflinchingly.

"Gentlemen," said the newcomer, pausing and looking around at the officers, "this fellow here is a rank impostor! He is no doubt masquerading among you as Lieutenant Merton, while he is in reality a rebel spy! I am Lieutenant

Merton, and this scoundrel and a friend of his captured me and deprived me of my uniform, which this fellow donned, as you can see, and while the other man took me a prisoner to the rebel army, this one came here, pretending to be me! But I escaped, and I am here now to spoil his well-laid plans. Seize him, gentlemen! Don't let the spy escape!"

The officers made no move to do as the newcomer said. They looked at Dick inquiringly, and were evidently influenced by his cool and composed air and calm demeanor.

If he were really a rebel, and spy, he would certainly betray some trepidation, they thought, and they were sure there must be some mistake.

The real Lieutenant Merton saw that they were in doubt, and he became more excited and angry than ever.

"Seize him, I say!" he cried; "he is a rebel spy! I am the real Lieutenant Merton!"

Dick thought it was about time for him to say something.

"Gentlemen," he said, quietly, "this man must be crazy! I am Lieutenant Merton, and he is the impostor. And as I am the person whom he claims he is, then it is more than probable that he is the person he says I am; in other words, I think it quite likely he is the rebel spy and impostor he speaks of, and his story is trumped up for the occasion. He must be a very bold and dangerous man, though, gentlemen, and we had better make him a prisoner at once!"

As Dick was talking, a thought had come to him; a plan had suggested itself.

It was a bold and audacious one, but this was a case where only some such plan would be likely to succeed.

The plan was to make the real Lieutenant Merton a prisoner, and then seize the first opportunity to escape from the British encampment.

Of course, the fact that the prisoner was really Lieutenant Merton would soon become known; but Dick was sure he would have time to make his escape.

It was his only chance, anyway, and as he ceased speaking he leaped forward and seized both wrists of the young man.

Dick was very strong, and he quickly jerked the lieutenant's wrists together, behind his back, and held them there.

"Tie his wrists, somebody!" said Dick, in a tone of command, and Pierson hastened to do so.

Lieutenant Merton struggled and protested, and even cursed, but it did no good, and the more excited and incoherent he became; the more he convinced the officers that Dick was right, and that he was a rebel spy, and an extremely bold one.

"Now, where shall we take him?" asked Dick.

"To the guard-house," replied Pierson, and they started



with the prisoner, but just before they reached the door it was opened and Colonel Rahl and another man entered.

A cry of joy escaped the lips of the real Lieutenant Merton.

"Lieutenant Towner!" he cried; "now I shall be able to prove that what I have said is true!"

Dick understood the situation instantly.

The man with Colonel Rahl was an acquaintance of Lieutenant Merton, and would identify him as the real Lieutenant Merton.

Dick would be exposed, and would be arrested and hanged as a spy.

Dick realized this, and did not hesitate.

He acted instantly.

Letting go his hold of Lieutenant Merton, he leaped forward, and threw Colonel Rahl and his companion out of the way with such force that they reeled and almost fell.

Then he leaped through the doorway, out into the hall, and, seizing the knob of the front door, jerked the door open.

He leaped through and out into the street, and raced down the street at full speed.

The next instant the officers came pouring out of the building the youth had just left, and started in pursuit.

"Stop him! Stop the rebel spy!" was the cry.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### DICK ESCAPES.

"They'll have hard work stopping me, I think!" thought Dick, grimly. "I am not going to be taken prisoner if I can help it!"

Dick was a speedy runner, and he kept the pursuers from gaining on him without exerting himself unduly.

He knew it was going to be hard work to get out of the British encampment, however.

While he was in town he could turn corners, and, if necessary, take refuge in some house, but after he left the town, if he decided to do so, he would likely be captured.

Dick was suddenly confronted by a couple of Hessian soldiers.

The fellows heard the pursuing officers shouting, and they tried to stop the fleeing youth.

Dick knocked one down, evaded the other, and ran onward at undiminished speed.

He turned a corner, just as he heard the sharp report of a firearm, and realized that the Hessian soldier had fired at him.

"A miss is as good as a mile," the youth thought, and he ran rapidly up the street.

He had gone but a few steps when a door in a house fronting on the sidewalk opened, and a man whom Dick recognized as Austin Marshall stood revealed.

Then Dick realized where he was. The house was that of Mr. Marshall.

The man recognized Dick.

"Come in, quick!" he cried.

Dick paused, and glanced back toward the corner.

No one was in sight.

He leaped forward and into the house, and Mr. Marshall closed the door.

"I mustn't stay here," said Dick. "I will get you into serious trouble if I do, and I would not do that for the world!"

"Have you been discovered?" asked Mr. Marshall, eagerly.

"Yes; the real Lieutenant Merton escaped from the patriot army and appeared and branded me as an impostor and rebel. I had to flee for my life!"

"I see; well, you are safe here."

"No, no! and neither would you be, if I remained. They know you are my friend, and will be here soon to search the house. I must hasten away. Show me out through the rear door, and I will hasten away; then when they search the house they will have no excuse for working you injury."

Mrs. Marshall and Mildred appeared now, looking curious and excited, and Mr. Marshall explained the situation to them.

"So you are a patriot, like ourselves!" exclaimed Mildred; "and you told father last night! That was the reason he was so willing for you to call! I wondered why he took such a notion to you!"

Dick smiled.

"I must not remain here longer," he said. "I will say good-bye and go at once. After we have driven the red-coats away from here, and back to New York, however, I hope to meet and greet you again."

"We shall be glad to see you," said Mr. Marshall.

Mrs. Marshall and Mildred both said the same, and Mildred looked it, too.

Then Mr. Marshall led the way to the rear door and opened it.

Dick looked out, and, seeing that all was quiet, he shook hands with the patriot and stepped out into the back yard.

As he did so, the sound of a loud knocking upon the front door, which was at the other end of the hall, came to their ears.

"There they are!" said Dick. "Good-bye!"



"Good-bye, and success to you and to the patriot army!" said Mr. Marshall, and then he closed the door.

Dick ran across the yard, leaped over the back fence into the alley, and ran up the alley to the street.

He looked out, to see if the coast was clear, and seeing no one, he stepped out and hastened away, down the street.

"I'll escape them yet!" he thought. "Ah! if I can get safely back to the patriot army with the information which I have acquired, General Washington will be enabled to deal the British a blow they will not soon forget!"

Dick did not run, as he felt that that would stamp him as a fugitive at once, should anyone see him, and so he contented himself with walking at a rapid pace.

He soon reached a corner and turned it, and then he felt pretty safe.

"I hope no harm will befall Mr. Marshall's folks," he thought.

Presently an exclamation of pleasure escaped Dick.

"A horse!" he murmured. "I believe I will risk it, and help myself to the means the gods provide!"

A horse, bridled and saddled, stood hitched in front of a house, and Dick walked quietly up to the animal, spoke to him, and untying the halter-strap, leaped into the saddle and rode away.

He let the horse walk, as he thought it less likely to attract attention than if he were to start off at a gallop.

The front door of the house in front of which the horse had been hitched opened, and a colored servant looked out and then ran back.

A few moments later several persons came running out of the house, and Dick heard an angry voice call out:

"Stop, thief! Come back here with my horse!"

He glanced back, saw that he was discovered, and urged the horse into a gallop.

To stop would be the last thing he would think of doing.

Crack! went a pistol-shot, and Dick smiled as he realized that the owner of the horse had fired upon him.

"Try again!" he murmured. "You couldn't hit me in a week!"

The owner of the horse did fire once more, but the bullet did not come anywhere near Dick.

"The danger for me lies in front, and not behind," the youth thought, grimly. "Well, I must get through the lines by hook or crook—and I will get through, too, or know the reason why."

The youth rode onward at a gallop, and presently the town was left behind.

He was approaching the outposts of the British army, and here was where he would have to be very careful.

Presently he struck into a country road, and rode along at a rapid gait.

Pretty soon the road entered the timber, and he was riding along, still at a gallop, when he was challenged:

"Halt! Who comes there?"

"A friend," replied Dick, slackening the speed of the horse down to a walk.

A sentinel stepped out into the road with leveled musket.

"Halt!" he cried again. "Who are you, and where are you going?"

Dick rode right up close to the sentinel and replied:

"I am Lieutenant Merton, bound for New York with despatches for General Howe."

"Ha! I know you now!" the sentinel cried; "you are the rebel spy!"

Then he threw up the muzzle of the musket till it covered Dick, and fired.

Dick had seen the movement in time, however, and he struck up the muzzle of the musket, the bullet going almost straight up in the air.

Then Dick struck the sentinel a blow in the face with his fist, and struck the horse in the flanks with his heels.

The horse leaped away and was fifty yards distant before the sentinel got straightened up.

The sentinel drew a pistol and fired, but he had just got over viewing a lot of shooting stars, and his eyesight was far from good, the result being that the bullet from the pistol did not come anywhere near Dick.

"That was a close call," thought the youth. "Well, I am all right now, and if there are no other sentinels near I shall make my escape easily."

Dick looked back and saw there were several men in the road, and knew that the sound of the shots had brought them there.

"They are behind me, and not in front of me," he thought; "so I don't care how many of them there are there."

He rode onward, and to his great satisfaction he was not challenged again.

"I guess I am all right now," he thought. "I'll keep on in this same direction for a mile, at least, and then make a circuit and head for Joe Saunders' cabin in the woods."

Dick did this, and an hour later he entered the little clearing in the timber, and, leaping from the saddle, tied the horse to a tree.

Then he made his way to the door and knocked.

He heard footsteps within, and then the door opened and revealed Joe himself to Dick's view.

"Hello! is it you, Dick, back again, well and safe?" he exclaimed.



"Yes, it is I, Joe, back again, safe and sound; but I came very near not making it. That young lieutenant I was impersonating, and whom you took across the river, escaped and came to the British encampment and confronted me."

"What!" exclaimed Joe. "You don't mean it?"

"Yes, he escaped in some manner, Joe, and came in on me just as I was having a fine time with the British and Hessian officers. I had made myself lots of friends and would have stayed another day but for the sudden appearance of Lieutenant Merton."

"I knew nothing of his escape, Dick. I came right back here and have been here ever since."

"Well, can you take me across the river, Joe?"

"Certainly, Dick."

"Come, then; I wish to get across at once, as I have some very valuable information for the commander-in-chief."

"I am ready."

They left the cabin, and Dick untied the horse and led him along.

"I was forced to confiscate this animal, Joe," laughed Dick. "But for him I don't think I should be here now."

"All is fair in war times, Dick."

"True, Joe."

"How did you succeed in your task, Dick? Did you have any trouble?"

"No; not till that young lieutenant appeared. I was getting along fine till then, and had made a lot of friends among the officers. Well, I say I had no trouble; I had a little. I knocked a Hessian captain down on the street for insulting a girl, the daughter of a patriot, one Austin Marshall——"

"I know him!" said Joe.

"The captain challenged me, and we fought a duel this morning at dawn."

Joe looked at his companion admiringly.

"Fought a duel!"

"Yes; he challenged me, and I could not refuse to fight without being branded a coward, and I could not permit that, you know."

"No, of course not; but how did you come out?"

Joe was interested.

"Oh, I came out all right. We fought with pistols at ten paces, and I gave him an ugly wound in the shoulder. He missed me altogether."

"Well, you are a great boy!" said Joe, admiringly. "I'm glad you gave him a wound to remember you by, anyway."

"So am I. He was a double-dyed scoundrel."

"I don't doubt that."

"He deserved killing, but I didn't want to have his blood on my hands, so let him off with a wound that will keep him in bed for two or three weeks."

They went down to the river-bank and Dick led his horse onto the flatboat.

Then they started across, and after three-quarters of an hour of hard work they reached the other shore.

"There is one thing I wish to say to you before we part," said Dick, "and that is this: You will be in danger, back there in the cabin, now that that young lieutenant has escaped. What will you do?"

"I don't think I will be in any very great danger, Dick."

"Yes, you will; that young fellow wants revenge on somebody, and will bring soldiers and capture you if you stay there. You had better move."

"There is another cabin half a mile farther up the river. I might go there."

"You had better do so, and go there at once. They may come for you this very night."

"I will take your advice, Dick, as I do not wish to fall into the hands of the redcoats."

The two shook hands, and then Joe started back across the river, and Dick mounted the horse and rode away, through the timber, in the direction of the American encampment.

Twenty minutes later he rode into the encampment, and after greeting Bob Estabrook at the quarters of the company of "Liberty Boys," he gave the horse into Bob's care, while he made his way to the house occupied by General Washington as headquarters.

He knocked upon the door and it was opened by an orderly.

"I wish to see the commander-in-chief," said Dick. "Tell him it is Dick Slater, please."

"Come in, Dick!" called a firm but eager voice, which the youth recognized as belonging to the commander-in-chief, and he entered the room, to find General Washington and several members of his staff there.

The great man rose and shook hands with Dick.

"When did you get back, Dick?" he asked.

"I have but just arrived, your excellency," said Dick; "I came straight here to report to you."

"Right; and what success have you had, my boy? Did you learn aught of the arrangement of the British troops, and find out, approximately, how many men they have?"

"I did, your excellency," replied Dick; "if you will give me paper, ink and quill, I will make a drawing, showing the exact location of the troops. I was over the entire field today, and saw it all with my own eyes."



"Good! Here, sit at my desk and make the drawing."

Dick sat down at the desk and went to work at once.

## CHAPTER IX.

### BOLD WORK.

It did not take him long, and when he had finished he had made a good drawing, showing the disposition of the British forces on the opposite bank of the Delaware River.

General Washington and the members of his staff examined the drawing eagerly, and discussed the question of making an attack with an earnestness that showed they meant business.

They asked Dick a great many questions, and kept him there an hour, at least, before they would let him go.

When they had finished, Dick asked the commander-in-chief to do him a favor.

"Foraging parties of the British are overrunning the country round about Trenton," he said, "and I would like to take my company of 'Liberty Boys' and go across the river, and see if I can capture some of the parties in question. Will you let me do this?"

"Yes," replied the commander-in-chief; "but you must exercise caution, and you must be back to-morrow night."

"Very well, your excellency," said Dick, and then he saluted and took his departure.

He hastened back to the quarters occupied by the company of "Liberty Boys," and told them what he wished to do. All were in for it.

They had been cooped up here, in camp, so long that they were anxious to get out and do something—anything.

The plan which Dick purposed putting into effect promised adventure and excitement, and they were ready for it.

"When will we start, Dick?" asked Bob Estabrook, eagerly.

"Just as soon as we can get ready, Bob."

"Good! I'm ready now. How about the rest of you?"

The others said they could be ready in a very few minutes, and Dick told them to get ready at once.

There was a hurrying about, and soon the youths who constituted the "Liberty Boys of '76" had secured their arms and ammunition and were ready.

They left their quarters and, led by Dick, made their way out of the camp, heading up the river.

"By permission of the commander-in-chief," said Dick to the sentinel, when that worthy halted them, and they were allowed to pass.

A walk of three-quarters of an hour brought them to the log cabin occupied by the men who guarded the boats, and when Dick told the officer in charge what he wished, the officer ordered several of the men to take the company of "Liberty Boys" across the river.

This they did, the passage occupying about an hour, as there was more or less floating ice in the river, and considerable care had to be exercised.

They reached the other shore in safety, however, and then the "Liberty Boys" struck off through the timber.

Dick led the way, the others following, and he made a wide circuit, and got around to the east side of the British army.

They were in the timber, and presently they came to a point where the ground sloped downward, leading to a sort of little valley.

Suddenly Dick gave utterance to a suppressed exclamation.

"What is it, Dick?" asked Bob.

"I see campfires, Bob."

"Where?"

"Ahead of us, down in the valley."

"Ah! I see them now."

"And so do I."

"And I."

"It is a British encampment," said Dick.

"Foragers?" asked Bob.

"I don't know; possibly."

"Let's find out!" said Bob, who was eager to go forward.

"Very well; come along, but be very careful, and don't make any noise."

They moved forward, slowly and carefully, and presently they stood at the edge of the little valley, and could see the enemy.

There were perhaps a dozen large campfires, made by piling up heaps of dead limbs of trees, and in the light thus made could be seen the brilliant uniforms of the British. There were many men there dressed in citizens' clothing also, and it was evident that they were Tories.

"It's a gang of British and Tories," whispered Dick to Bob; "I judge that the Tories have come here to meet the British by appointment, for the purpose of joining the British army and being conducted into the British encampment."

"I guess you are right, Dick," was Bob's whispered reply.

Dick was silent for a few moments.

He was busy counting the men.

"There are about fifty of them," he said to himself.

"What a feather in our cap it would be if we could capture the entire gang!"



Dick knew this would be a very risky thing to attempt, but he was a bold youth; nothing ever daunted him, and it was the same with the other members of the company. They would follow where Dick led, and fight to the death.

"Let's try to effect their capture, Bob," said Dick, in a whisper.

"I'm in for it, Dick!" was the eager reply.

Then Dick went among the other members of the company and found that all were willing to make the attempt.

This decided, Dick went among them again and told them his plan.

It was to surround the gang of redcoats and Tories, and then demand their unconditional surrender, on pain of being annihilated should they refuse.

As soon as all were given to understand what was expected of them, the movement was begun.

It was carefully executed, and took an hour to accomplish.

At the end of that time the company of "Liberty Boys" were drawn up in a complete circle, surrounding the unsuspecting redcoats and Tories.

And now Dick did a thing as remarkable for its audacity and daring as anything ever ventured by any person.

He coolly and calmly walked out from the enveloping darkness and confronted the astonished redcoats, who were holding a conversation with the Tories.

"I wish to speak to the commander here," said Dick, calmly, and in a very firm tone of voice.

"I am the commander here," said a British officer, stepping forward; "and who are you?"

"I am Dick Slater, at your service, captain of the 'Liberty Boys of '76,' and I beg leave to inform you that you are completely surrounded and at our mercy! At a word from me you will be utterly annihilated by a single volley from the three hundred muskets which are at this moment covering you, and I have come to demand that you surrender at once, and unconditionally, thus saving yourselves from being massacred!"

The commander of the redcoats stared at Dick in speechless amazement.

The audacity of the youth was simply paralyzing.

He had heard of Dick Slater, the boy spy, and he had heard, also, of the "Liberty Boys of '76," and knew they were fiends to fight, but at the same time this British officer was an unusually brave man.

He did not like to surrender to Dick without raising a hand in opposition.

He was an old campaigner, and had fought in more than one war before coming to America, and he scented a trap, or trick.

He doubted there being three hundred of the "rebels,"

and he would be disgraced forever if he surrendered to a small force.

So he decided to not surrender, and he was one man who succeeded in taking Dick by surprise.

Without a word, he leaped forward and seized Dick.

"To arms!" he cried; "don't surrender, but fight to the last ditch!"

Dick was taken by surprise, but he was not disposed to submit to capture at the hands of the British commander.

He struck the man a hard blow full in the face, at the same time tripping him, and the officer went down with a crash.

Then Dick leaped back into the shadow of the trees.

He got behind a tree, just in time, for the redcoats and Tories had seized their muskets, and they fired a volley into the timber and darkness, in the hope that they might do some execution.

Then the British commander, who had regained his feet by this time, and was in a terrible rage as a result of the rough manner in which Dick had handled him, shouted:

"Charge the scoundrels! Charge them, I say!"

The redcoats and Tories obeyed, and came toward the timber at a run.

"Fire!" cried Dick.

The "Liberty Boys" obeyed the order and fired a volley into the faces of the oncoming British and Tories, and several of them fell.

The rest came onward, however, and Dick cried:

"Give them a volley from your pistols! Fire!"

Again the volley rang out, and again several of the redcoats fell.

"With the other pistol! Fire!" cried Dick, and again the volley rang out, and more of the redcoats fell.

Their line was badly broken up now, and they were in disorder.

Dick saw this, and he took advantage of it.

"Charge bayonets!" he shouted, and the "Liberty Boys" obeyed, rushing forward with a wild cheer that carried terror to the hearts of the British and redcoats.

Their commander shouted for them to stand their ground, and they did so, and the "Liberty Boys" and the redcoats and Tories came together with a crash.

The hand-to-hand conflict which raged there for the next half-minute was fierce in the extreme, but the onslaught of the "Liberty Boys" was too much for the enemy, and the redcoats and Tories gave way, and then fled in disorder, pursued by the victorious youths, for a short distance only, as Dick called them back.

Three of the "Liberty Boys" were wounded, but, strange to say, not one had been killed.



It had been a hard fight, however, while it lasted, and the youths soon found that they were not yet out of danger, for suddenly they heard the voice of the redcoat commander, urging his men to return to the attack.

"We had better retire into the darkness of the timber," said Dick. "They outnumber us greatly, and one volley from their muskets would thin us out."

The "Liberty Boys" retired into the timber, and presently they heard the voices of redcoats in several different directions.

"Say, I believe others have come, and they are trying to surround us, Dick!" said Bob.

"I think you are right, Bob," was the reply. "We are beset by British and Tories, but we will get away and fool them yet."

"I hope so, Dick!"

The "Liberty Boys" remained perfectly quiet, and listened for several minutes.

They could hear the voices of the redcoats and Tories in three or four different directions, and Dick realized that if he and his companions remained where they were they would be hemmed in, and in all likelihood would be captured.

That would never do, and he made up his mind to fool their enemies.

"Boys," he said, "we will have to bring into play our knowledge of woodcraft, and slip through between two of the parties of redcoats. In that way we will be enabled to make our escape."

The youths agreed with their young commander, and told him to lead on and they would follow.

"We trust to you, Dick," said Bob. "Where you go we will follow."

"Come along, then," Dick said; "keep in single file, and each fellow hold to the coat of the one in front of him, so that we may not become separated in the darkness."

The rest said they would do so, and they set out.

It was slow work, and Dick paused every ten or fifteen yards to listen.

That was the only way they could guide themselves, by the sense of hearing, as they could see nothing.

Dick would pause long enough so that he would hear voices to the right and to the left, and then he would go straight ahead; or if he heard voices in front he would turn aside, and by pursuing these tactics they were enabled to finally get outside of the circle which the British and Tories were trying to draw around them.

When satisfied that they were safely outside the ring of soldiers, Dick led the youths onward for a mile and then stopped.

They held a little council of war and decided that as it

was near morning they might as well keep moving slowly, and keep on the lookout for small encampments of the redcoats, or for returning foraging parties.

When daylight appeared they made their way slowly back toward the point where they had had the encounter with the redcoats and Tories, and when they came in sight of the little valley they were surprised to see quite a large party of British and Tories there.

But what attracted the attention of the youths more than anything else was a lot of horses which were picketed close to the edge of the timber, and only a short distance from where Dick and the "Liberty Boys" were.

"Let's capture the horses!" said Bob, eagerly.

Dick was willing to make the attempt, as were the rest, and it was decided to make a sudden dash.

Each youth was to seize a horse, mount, and then they would ride away as quickly as possible.

All got ready, and at the word from Dick they rushed out of the edge of the timber.

They soon reached the horses, and, cutting the halter-straps, leaped on the animals' backs.

They were seen by the British and Tories, who leaped up from where they sat beside the campfires, with shouts of anger.

"Charge them!" cried Dick, in a loud, ringing voice.

They did so.

The "Liberty Boys," mounted on the captured horses, made a wild dash through the ranks of the British and Tories, mowing them down like tenpins.

## CHAPTER X.

### A GLORIOUS VICTORY.

The redcoats and their allies made an attempt to stand before the horses, but could not do it.

The rush of the animals was too fierce.

Then, too, the "Liberty Boys" had their muskets in their hands, and fired a volley as they struck the lines of the British.

A number clubbed their muskets, too, and dealt sweeping blows as they rode through the struggling mass of redcoats and Tories, and the result was a number of broken heads and arms for those worthies.

Then the youths swept onward, leaving a badly demoralized lot of Britons behind them.

They rode into the timber, and soon struck a road, which they turned into and followed a mile or more.



Then they turned aside, and Dick led the way toward the cabin occupied by Joe Saunders.

They reached the cabin, after half an hour's riding, and found it vacant.

Joe was not there.

Then Dick remembered that Joe had said he would move to another cabin half a mile farther up the river, and they rode on up in that direction.

They succeeded in finding the cabin, and found Joe there.

He was delighted to see them, and laughed heartily when told of the manner in which they had secured the horses.

"That was a bold piece of business," he said; "but bold strokes are sometimes more successful than any other kind."

"True," said Dick; "and now, Joe, can we leave the horses here? Or had we better try to get them across the river?"

"Well, I'll tell you, if General Washington figures on attacking the British and forcing them back to New York, he is likely to succeed, and if he succeeds, he will come back into Jersey, in which case he would want the horses here, so I think we might as well leave them here until we see how things work out, anyway."

"That's what I think," agreed Dick, and it was decided to do this.

The youths tied the horses to trees, and were glad to find that Joe had some corn and oats there with which to feed the animals.

Then they ate breakfast with Joe, it keeping him very busy for an hour at least to cook enough venison to satisfy the hunger of the "Liberty Boys."

Then they left the cabin, and struck out through the timber.

They wanted to make some captures of redcoats or Tories, if possible, and late that afternoon they did succeed in surrounding and capturing a foraging party of about twenty.

These prisoners they took across the river, and into the American camp in triumph.

Dick was congratulated by the commander-in-chief in person, and all the members of the company of "Liberty Boys" were praised for their good work.

General Washington was particularly well pleased when told of the horses that had been captured, as they were something that would come into good play, for hauling the cannon, ammunition wagons, etc.

Next day would be the twenty-fifth—Christmas—and the commander-in-chief sent out word for the patriot soldiers to enjoy themselves on this evening and night, for on the morrow-night he would have stern work for them.

The soldiers knew that the commander-in-chief never

spoke idly, and they set out to have their Christmas on Christmas Eve.

They had as good a time as they could under the circumstances, and many were the foraging parties that went out from the encampment that night in search of geese and turkeys, chickens, pigs and other animals and fowls.

They were determined to have a good Christmas dinner on the morrow, anyway.

They were quite successful, and there was not an officer or common soldier in the American camp who did not have enough to eat at dinner next day.

They might go hungry the next day, but they were determined they would have plenty on Christmas.

And then, as the sun sank behind the western horizon, that evening, the encampment sprang into sudden life.

The commander-in-chief's plans were all made, and he was determined to accord to the British and Hessians such a Christmas greeting as they were not looking for.

His intention was to cross the Delaware River in three divisions.

One division, under General Gates, was to attack Count Donop, at Burlington; another, under General Ewing, was to cross directly opposite Trenton, and attack the Hessians, while General Washington, with twenty-four hundred picked men, was to ascend the river nine miles, cross and come down upon Trenton from the north.

General Gates, however, who was a man somewhat on the order of the traitor Lee, and who preferred intrigue to fighting, had begged off, that day, and had started for Baltimore, to have an interview with Congress, he having—or imagining he had—a grievance because General Schuyler was above him.

Gates' division was then placed under the command of Cadwalader.

Dick Slater and his brave band of "Liberty Boys" were chosen to go with the division under the commander-in-chief, and this was as they wished it.

At last the army, in the three divisions, broke camp, and moved on its perilous expedition.

Washington's division marched northward, along the river, a distance of nine miles, and the boats which were to take them across the river were found there, in readiness.

Just as they were about to embark, a messenger arrived from Ewing and Cadwalader, announcing that they had failed in their attempts to cross the river, the floating ice in the river and the storm making it impossible to accomplish the task.

It was a dreadful night, sure enough.

Snow and sleet were falling, and the fine, hard little pel-



lets were driven by the wind into the faces of the soldiers, and they cut almost like knife-points.

Washington did not hesitate, however.

Because the others had failed was no reason he should do so.

He gave the order to embark, and the soldiers got into the boats, and the start was made.

There is no one act of Washington's which betrayed his great courage and wonderful determination more than this one of the crossing of the Delaware on Christmas night, 1776.

The great masses of floating ice, carried along swiftly, were extremely dangerous, as they threatened every instant to strike a boat and stave in its sides, but the men who manned the boats were Marblehead fishermen, than whom there were no more brave or skillful boatmen, and they succeeded in getting the boats across the river without the loss of a man or a gun.

But it took them ten hours to do it.

Think of that! Ten hours—the entire night!

Think of being all night in open boats, in a storm of driving sleet, and threatened with death with each passing moment!

And then think again of the fact that they were going, a mere handful of men, to attack a far greater force—going to possible death in battle!

Think of all this, and then pause and reflect that but for the fact that this was accomplished, and the attack on Trenton was successful, the patriot army would have dissolved on New Year's day on account of the fact that the majority of the men's terms of service expired then. And then pause and reflect that but for the iron will, the grim determination of one great man, Washington, this would not have been accomplished; and think of what that would have meant:

That in all probability the War of the Revolution would have ended, then and there, and that it would have ended in the triumph of the British!

Do you begin to realize, reader, what we owe to George Washington?

No one has ever yet advanced the name of a man who would likely have done what George Washington did on Christmas night, 1776, and as that one grand stroke saved the country, practically, it proves beyond all doubt that Washington was one of the greatest of great men.

After they had succeeded in getting across the river, there still remained a march of nine miles through a driving storm of snow and sleet, but those brave men never faltered.

They started on the wearisome march cheerfully, and that

it was a painful and wearisome task is amply proven when it is known that at least two of the patriot soldiers were frozen to death before the end of the nine miles' march was reached.

The army was divided into two columns, one under Greene, the other under Sullivan.

They marched as rapidly as possible under the circumstances, and reached the outskirts of Trenton at sunrise.

Greene and his men entered the town by one road, and Sullivan by another, driving in the pickets ahead of them at the point of the bayonet.

The cannon were planted so as to sweep the streets, and the action began.

The Hessians were taken completely by surprise.

An attack by the "rebels" was the thing farthest from their minds.

They would have laughed had anyone suggested the possibility, ten minutes before it actually happened, that the "rebels" would appear on this morning, in the midst of a driving storm.

A man who would have prophesied any such thing would have been considered a fit candidate for the lunatic asylum.

And this, as General Washington had calculated, made the affair an easy success for the patriot army.

The Hessians were paralyzed by the audacity of the thing.

Then, too, they had been up a good portion of the night, drinking and carousing, and they were sleepy and dull-witted.

Colonel Rahl himself had been invited to the house of a man named Hunt.

This man was a neutral trader, trading with both British and patriots, and he and Rahl had spent the night together, drinking wine and playing cards.

At early dawn a messenger had appeared at the house of this man Hunt, with a note for Colonel Rahl.

The note was written and sent by a Tory, who had seen the American army approaching Trenton, and it would have given Rahl the needed warning had he read the note; but he was excited by the wine and cards, and he stuck the note in his pocket, unread.

And sealed his own death-warrant!

Half an hour later the roll of drums and the boom of cannon was heard, and the officer rushed out of the house to find the Americans in pursuit of his soldiers.

Colonel Rahl was a brave man, and he attempted to rally his men and make a stand, but it was impossible to do so.

He was shot down, and seventeen of his men had been killed when it was decided to surrender.

One thousand Hessian soldiers fell into Washington's hands.



When the American troops entered Trenton, Dick Slater and his brave company of "Liberty Boys" were in the front ranks, and they did much to discourage the Hessians by the fierce and enthusiastic manner in which they charged up the street.

It was a glorious triumph for General Washington.

He had done even better than he had expected to do.

He had expected to so break up and disorganize the Hessians in Trenton that they would retire and retreat toward New York, but instead of that he had captured the entire force.

It was indeed a grand and glorious achievement.

It was at about ten o'clock when Dick received a summons to appear before the commander-in-chief, who had taken up his quarters for the day in the same building in which Colonel Rahl had had his headquarters, and where he died.

"I have sent for you to thank you, Dick, for the splendid work which you did in entering the Hessian encampment and learning the location of the troops, and the number of the men. Without that knowledge I could not have achieved the signal success which has crowned my efforts. Much of the credit for the success of this affair belongs to you, and again I say, 'I thank you for what you did!'"

Dick was embarrassed, and disclaimed the credit.

"I did simply my duty, your excellency," he said; "and that is what every man in your army did this morning and last night."

Dick's modesty pleased Washington.

"I am glad to see you so modest, my boy," he said; "but I must insist that we owe much to you."

Dick got away as quickly as he could, as he did not like to hear himself praised, and as he left the house a thought struck him:

Why not go and call on Mr. Marshall and his wife and daughter?

Dick decided to do so at once.

He made his way to their home and knocked upon the door.

He was ushered into the parlor by a servant, and a few moments later Mr. Marshall and his wife and daughter entered the room.

When they saw who it was they were delighted, and all greeted the youth enthusiastically.

"So you made your escape, the other night, eh?" remarked Mr. Marshall.

"Yes," replied Dick; "I found a horse down the street a ways, and confiscated it to my own use, and got away in lively fashion."

"Oh, isn't it glorious, the defeat and capture of the hated Hessians!" exclaimed Mildred, with energy and spirit.

"It is very pleasing to all true patriots," said Dick.

"It was a great achievement," said Mr. Marshall. "It will give the British a setback such as they were not looking for."

"You are right," coincided Dick. "They thought the war was practically ended; now they will change their minds."

"They will have to do so," said Mrs. Marshall. "Well, I am very, very glad that they will not be here to bother us any more."

"What is to be done with the prisoners?" asked Mr. Marshall.

"I do not know for certain, but I think they will be taken across the river into Pennsylvania this afternoon."

"We can spare them," smiled Mildred.

"I don't suppose you will shed many tears over their departure," said Dick.

"No, indeed!"

Then Dick, being pressed to do so, told the story of his adventures during the flight from Trenton, the night he was found out to be a patriot spy.

Dick spent a couple of hours there, and was forced to stay to luncheon.

He was not unwilling, however.

That afternoon, the one thousand prisoners were taken across the river to the American encampment, and Mr. Marshall, his wife and Mildred, stood in the door and waved to Dick as he passed, walking at the head of his company of "Liberty Boys."

"Isn't he a brave and handsome young man!" said Mildred, enthusiastically, and her father and mother could not but acquiesce in this statement.

It was a big task, getting the prisoners across the river, but in the daytime it was easier to avoid the cakes of floating ice, and the thing was accomplished before dark.

To say that the patriot soldiers were happy that night is putting it very mildly indeed.

They had won a great victory, and they had a right to be happy.

They celebrated by means of bonfires, and a number of the officers made speeches.

The commander-in-chief himself made a brief but characteristic speech, and was cheered enthusiastically.

At the conclusion of his speech, General Washington suggested that they call upon Dick Slater, the captain of the company of "Liberty Boys of '76," for a speech, and this was done, as Dick was well known to the majority, and was well liked.



Dick was forced to make a little speech, and when he had finished he was cheered almost as enthusiastically as the commander-in-chief had been.

"You are all right, Dick!" said Bob, approvingly, when Dick had rejoined him. "You made a splendid speech. You'll be next in command to General Washington if this war holds out another year or so."

"Oh, I guess hardly, Bob!" replied Dick, with a smile.

But to Bob this did not seem at all improbable.

He thought that, next to the commander-in-chief, Dick Slater was by far the most important person in any way connected with the patriot army.

Nor was he so very far out of the way.

Dick, the boy spy, was destined to play many important parts during the years that were to elapse before the war for Independence was to be brought to a successful close.

#### THE END.

The next number (9) of "The Liberty Boys of '76" will contain "THE LIBERTY BOYS TO THE RESCUE; OR, A HOST WITHIN THEMSELVES," by Harry Moore.

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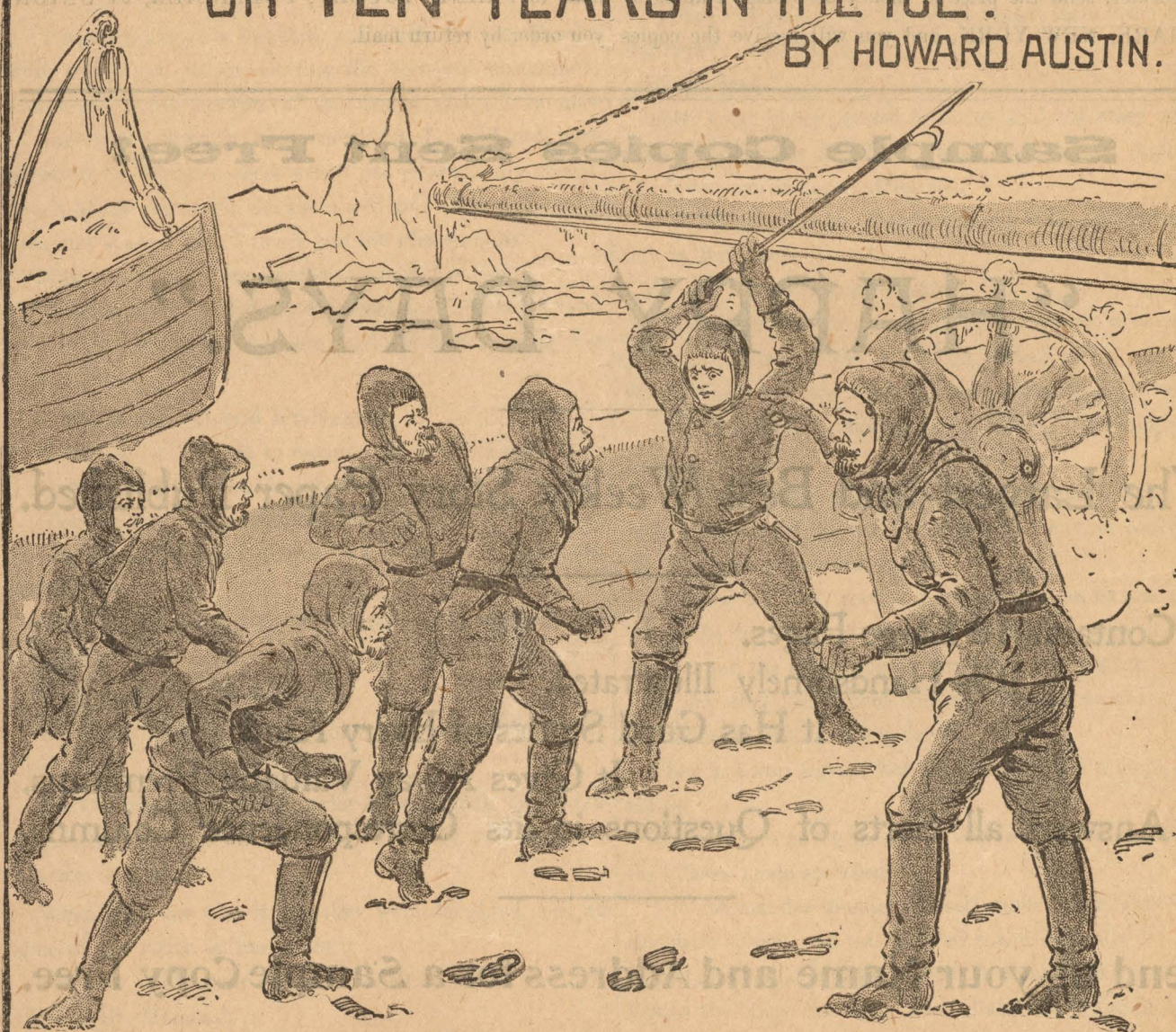
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